

*Wm. Bell*  
A  
DISCOURSE

ON THE

CHRISTIAN UNION:

The Substance of which was delivered

BEFORE

The Reverend CONVENTION

OF THE

CONGREGATIONAL CLERGY

In the Colony

OF

RHODE-ISLAND;

Assembled at BRISTOL

*April 23, 1760.*

By EZRA STILES, A. M.

PASTOR of the second Congregational Church in NEWPORT.

Thy FATHERS went down into Egypt with three-score and ten  
Persons, and now the Lord thy GOD hath made thee as the Stars  
of Heaven for Multitude. DEUT. X. 22.

Four Thousand British Planters settled NEW-ENGLAND, and in 120  
Years their Posterity are increased to five hundred thousand souls.

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DISCOVERIES

OF THE

CHRISTIAN UNION

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THE  
CHRISTIAN UNION.

PHILIPPIANS III. 16.

*Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained,  
let us walk by the same Rule, let us mind  
the same Thing.*

**W**HILE Paul continued at Rome the saints of Philippi raised a gratuity for his relief, and sent Epaphroditus to present it to their suffering apostle. Epaphroditus, after a dangerous sickness, returning home to Philippi, St. Paul sent by him this letter of thanks to that beneficent assembly of christians, who had liberally contributed to his relief. This incident was the occasion of this epistle, yet the apostle takes this opportunity to impart some good gifts to them of a spiritual nature, in return for their affection and temporal relief. Besides some elucidations and bright touches on the peculiar doctrines of the christian faith, doctrines however common to the church universal in all ages; and besides some incidental reflexions on the then present state of the christian cause;—he intersperses the whole with observations adapted to the peculiar state of things at Philippi. If we consider this, it will very much assist us

in understanding the several parts of this epistle. And indeed we shall find the apostle in all his letters has a general eye to the particular circumstances of the church or person to whom he writes—and many sentences and allusions are restricted by these views. His most extensive design, in all his epistles, was to confirm the faithful : to which end he attentively inspected the state of the churches, and according to their different exigences, he imparted his spiritual advice and apostolic exhortation.

The saints at Philippi were united in a good opinion of saint Paul, their spiritual father, and paid a high regard to his dictates and advice, whether given by inspiration, or his own private judgment. And he made use of this influence, not to aggrandize himself, but to serve the cause of the redeemer, by settling and reconciling differences and animosities, by cultivating that fellowship and union ; which being enlarged to the comprehension of a numerous body of christians, was appointed to succede the miraculous powers in supporting and diffusing christianity through the world. God's ways are consummately wise. In the infancy of the gospel, the miraculous powers subserved two ends, the *support* and *evidence*, or verification, of christianity. And having demonstrably attested the cause, and supernaturally upheld it against all opposition, till it had formed such an interest among men, as, being cemented by the noble principle of union and benevolence, it might support and propagate itself in a natural way, these powers were gradually withdrawn, when effectual care had been taken for the security of the gospel. The transmitting of it therefore in some measure devolved itself on its converts, under the all-controlling, over-ruling providence of heaven. Tho' God accomplishes his moral, as well as natural ends, by secondary causes and subordinate means ; yet there is room for the concurrent agency of these causes—and hence we are to work together with God. The apostles took early care, as the number of the faithful increased,



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increased, to recommend this useful principle of union and benevolence, which, cementing the body of believers, should in due time form an impregnable *esprit du corps* to succede the supernatural effusions of the divine spirit, and co-operate with God in carrying on and supporting the same great design. Even in the infancy of the churches—while being too small to form respectable unions; and consequently while yet they could not see and feel the immediate use which was afterwards to be made of the heavenly principles of *love* and *forgiveness* taught by their divine master:—The apostles carefully watched this principle, took peculiar care to implant and cultivate it, and used apostolic authority in recommending it.

And as the church multiplied, they were very attentive to extinguish animosities and heal differences, in one part and another: which arose, not from the nature of the christian institution, but from partial understanding of it, and from early imbibed prejudices, not at once to be worn off, and which the apostles treated with the utmost tenderness and wisdom. Besides what were incidental to particular churches, there were other mistakes of greater extent. The Jews were dispersed throughout the Roman empire, and settled in great numbers in Greece, Macedonia, and around the Archipelago. And though christianity never made any great impression on the body of that people, yet a few in almost every place became converts. These few nevertheless occasioned a very capital controversy, not easily settled by apostolic authority, which takes up some part of almost every book of the new-testament, except the evangelists: a controversy, which, being differently apprehended by christians of succeeding ages, has given birth to polemical divinity or controversy on the doctrines of faith. The few Jewish converts did at first receive Jesus Christ as the Messiah on the evidence of his *resurrection* chiefly and other *miracles*, and partly in *fulfilment of prophecy*: but did not imagine that either *circumcision* or



or the *law* was to be abolished. They therefore used their endeavours to bring the Gentile christians to the law ; and though they received Christ, yet their great dependance was on the law : They accordingly trusted for acceptance and justification to the works of the law, of more importance with them than that *righteousness which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith*. There were other Jewish converts, who tho' they did not lay the chief stress on the deeds of the law, yet thought the observance of it necessary, trusting nevertheless in the atonement of Christ, and preferring the righteousness by faith. The former were dangerous, being really enemies to the cross of Christ : the latter were tolerable, and might safely be received into the fellowship of the gospel ; it was necessary to act in steady opposition to the one, with the utmost condescension and humanity to the other.

The body of *hebrew christians* from the beginning retained *circumcision* and the *law*, which St. Paul had declared to be right for them, though not for the *gentile christians*. With difficulty the apostle kept them united in his day : but soon after his death the Hebrew converts broke off all charity and communion with the Gentile converts, because the latter would not observe *circumcision* and the *law*. They were long after distinguished and known by the name of *Nazarene*, or circumcised, christians. The *Copti* christians *circumcise* to this day. *Josephus* the historian is said to have at last joined himself to those *believing Jews*, who about his time broke off all communication with the *believing Gentiles*. *Epiphanius* was acquainted with them, A. D. 370, and called them *heretics*, " for no other reason that I can perceive, but that they together with their christian faith, continued the use of *circumcision* and the *jewish law* ; which is a thing St. Paul never blamed in a *jewish christian*." He might have censured St. James and those thousands of the Jerusalem and

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and Galilee christians for hereticks, concerning whom St. James said to St. Paul, Acts 21. 20. *Thou seest, brethren, how many thousands of Jews there are, which BELIEVE, and they are ALL zealous of the LAW.*

This controversy had affected the church at Philippi, and perhaps Euodias and Syntiche might be Jewish converts, and very much at the head of it; the apostle says with respect to those who were the most crafty and indolent, fatigable in proselyting the Gentile christians to the ceremonial, pompous, burdensome institution of Moses, *beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision*; which plainly shews they were in danger from the quarter of which I have been speaking. The apostle therefore exhorts them to beware, to take heed, to be on their guard with respect to those teachers who enjoin circumcision, the ceremonial rites, the observation of Jewish holy-days, new-moons, and other festivals, and *place the essence of christianity in these things*. And he takes occasion to produce his own example in evidence—by which it appeared that he had been in every respect a Hebrew, stood complete in that righteousness which was of the law: but since his soul had been enlightened with the invaluable discoveries of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, he counted all his boasted attainments in judaism as a trifle, desiring henceforward to be found in Christ, not having on his own righteousness, which was of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ. Having entirely broke off from judaism, being convinced that it was superseded by a more perfect and sublime and spiritual institution, he pressed forward to perfection in Christ—and being desirous to unite as many as possible with him, he was willing to walk together with his brethren the Hebrew christians *as far as they had attained*, who sincerely believed in Christ, yet thought themselves obliged to observe the law. If they placed their dependance on Christ for acceptance, they might be indulged their peculiar affection

for



for the observance of their law, provided they would be content that the Gentile converts should be at liberty on these matters; it being far better for those that agreed in essentials, to live in harmony and fellowship, than under the most specious pretexts to resolve themselves into fruitless, undeterminable controversy and alienation. And then the apostle introduces this general advice, equally applicable to all, whether Jewish or Gentile converts, so far as they had attained, to walk by the same rule, and mind the same thing. This harmony would cement them into a respectable body, and perfect them in that benevolence and christian charity, without which they were nothing.

Having thus finished the necessary illustration of the text; I proceed to what I had principally in view, the application of it to us, my brethren, of the *congregational* denomination, as well in New-England in general, as the particular district of this colony. And in order to proceed clearly, and perceive that the principle of union recommended in the text, may be applicable and take place among our churches, I shall

I. Enumerate some of those fundamental principles of christianity and ecclesiastical polity, in which our churches are generally agreed.

II. I shall mention some things on which we differ in opinion, or are supposed to differ; and shew that this difference need not to obstruct the general harmony and union—and that these supposed differences might be greatly lessened by benevolent and honorable concessions. And

III. Subjoin some reasons, taken from the importance of the common cause, and the present state of our churches, to shew the wisdom and advantage of union and good fellowship, both among the ministers and the churches.

I. I shall enumerate some of the fundamental principles of revelation in which we are generally agreed. I shall not confine myself to those things which congregationalists particularly agree in—but shall have occasion to mention several



several things in which we have the happiness to agree with the protestant churches throughout the world; as well as others more peculiar to our own denomination.

1. We agree in the being and character of God. The author of the universe is himself underived and independent:—a being of absolute excellence and dignity, eternally happy and glorious of himself:—a being but imperfectly apprehended, known but in part by man:—a being in himself possessed of all possible perfection in a degree incomprehensible by our limited apprehensions; having besides those, whose illustrations we have the honor of perceiving, perhaps many perfections unknown to us. The displays of Deity to our little world lead our contemplations to four distinctions of perfection, which yet may be but one principle in the divine essence, I mean *omnipotence, wisdom, goodness, mercy*. His wisdom implies *omniscience* and personal rectitude with respect to himself:—With regard to the production and government of a supposed dependent creation, his infinite wisdom must discern and project and execute the wisest and best plan of a universe;—*wisest* because infinite discernment must perceive the only one, than which there is not another wiser, and in which the most complicated various and noble ends are accomplished in the shortest manner, according to the fewest simplest general laws;—*wisest* because admitting all possible subordinations and variety of action, happiness and social connexion;—therefore lastly, *wisest* and *best*, because most declarative of the divine glory, and eventually productive of the greatest quantity of the universal happiness.—I say, *divine wisdom*, of systems possible, must chuse that best one, which *omnipotence* prompted by infinite *goodness* might give existence to and perpetuate. We view the Deity at the head of the moral system as exercising a superintendant moral government, supreme dominion, all-controlling and everlasting *providence*. And tho' the divine complacency be

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apportioned

apportioned to the degrees of native or acquired excellence of every order and every individual; yet impartial equity takes place in the divine dispensations and conduct towards all the subordinations of being from infinite to nothing. This suggests the idea of divine *justice*, founded in and flowing from infinite wisdom, which, with respect to the unhappy beings who transgress the laws of eternal order, is exercised in connecting eventual punishment with unamending impenitence. The exercise of goodness to a revolted world is *mercy*:—which, as the universe must be a production very generally virtuous and right, is exercised that we know of towards no part of the creation, but this unhappy region which we inhabit. This general idea of the Deity and his character I suppose we are agreed in.

2. That notwithstanding God created this, as he did all other worlds, in order and rectitude, yet that we are now in a fallen and universally depraved state. I truly take this principle to be very generally agreeable to the opinion of our churches—however individuals may differ as to the origin and desert of moral evil. Some may attribute it to vicious example, some to the disorder of our external state, or the animal part of man, some to a principle of pollution born in us, and derived from Adam. But however we may vary in our opinions as to the cause of the present reigning universal depravity; yet two things I suppose we agree in with respect to it—one, that no blame is to be ascribed to God as the author of it; the other, that it is fact. Observation on the state of the world for 6000 years, or the review of it in history, shew that in fact disorder and vicious principle are predominant and reign with great strength in human nature. The universality of the effect shews a tendency and proclivity in our nature at present, however derived there; a proclivity which may be termed a characteristic or general principle of our present nature; even on allowance of the



the supposed exceptions, which in my opinion are not to be admitted, since this vicious principle has not been in fact controlled by the philosophers or their wisest moral systems, but has raged in the most enlightened and improved nations, more than among the savages themselves. From which there is reason to suspect that no one of the human race is destitute of it. Our souls may come out of the hands of God pure and unpolluted, and the pollution take place upon our entering this state. Nor is it the result of personal action alone: it may perhaps be impossible for an innocent and unexperienced mind, commencing its infant existence in a polluted world, not to be very soon affected with the contagion. The great Mr. *Locke* has resembled the infant mind to a *rasa tabula*, as he expresses it, a clean piece of paper, with no inscriptions, tho' susceptible of them. This is equally true of internal propensities, as of acquisitions in knowledge. Some indeed suppose or speak, as if they supposed that the pure and holy God infused into the soul at its first creation, and on its entrance into the world, the impure and unholy propensities both of flesh and spirit, which we find to have usurped the governing possession of us by the time we become capable of moral action; and consequently that our natures, as they come out of the hand of the benevolent creator, are corrupt, impure and unholy. But the learned president *EDWARDS* has asserted, that the doctrine of original sin, according to the sense and explication of the most orthodox divines, implies no such thing:—but that, we coming pure out of the hands of God, our impurity and moral defilement is altogether consequential upon our entrance into this world. I beg leave to subjoin his own words. Dr. *Taylor* supposes, says he, “ the doctrine of original sin to imply that nature must be corrupted by some *positive influence*; something by some means or other *infused* into the human nature; some *quality* or other, not from the choice of our minds,



" minds, but like a *teint, tincture* or *infection*, altering the  
 " natural constitution, faculties & dispositions of our souls:  
 " —that sin and evil dispositions are implanted in the  
 " *fætus* in the womb." Whereas truly our doctrine, says  
 " Mr. *Edwards*, neither implies nor infers any such thing.  
 " In order to account for a sinful corruption of nature,  
 " yea a total native depravity of heart, there is not the least  
 " need of supposing any evil quality *infused, implanted,*  
 " or *wrought* into the nature of man, by any *positive* cause  
 " or influence whatsoever, either from God or the creature:  
 " or of supposing that man is conceived and born with a  
 " *fountain of evil* in his heart, such as is any thing properly  
 " positive. I think a little attention to the nature of things  
 " will be sufficient to satisfy any impartial, considerate in-  
 " quirer, that the absence of *positive good* principles, and  
 " to the with-holding of a special divine influence to im-  
 " part and maintain these good principles, leaving the com-  
 " mon natural principle of self-love, natural appetite, &c.  
 " (which were in man in innocence) leaving these, I say,  
 " to themselves, without the government of superior, divine  
 " principles, will certainly be followed with the corrup-  
 " tion, yea the total corruption of the heart, without occa-  
 " sion of any positive influence at all: and that it was thus  
 " indeed that corruption of nature came on Adam imme-  
 " diately on his fall, and comes on all his posterity, as  
 " *sinning in him, and falling with him.*" \* These obser-  
 " vations appear to me to be very just. On which we may  
 " remark that this author asserts, that no "evil quality"  
 " is " *infused, implanted, or wrought* into the nature of  
 " man by any *positive* cause or influence whatsoever,  
 " either from God or the creature:" And that there is  
 " no need of "supposing that man is conceived and born  
 " with a *fountain of evil* in his heart." Our souls were all  
 " created by God pure and without stain, (with less perfecti-  
 " on indeed than had Adam successfully sustained the fæde-  
 " ral

\* *Edwards's Ans. to Taylor, p. 316.*

ral trial,) but entering a corrupted and disordered state, destitute of a positive propensity to holiness, tho' with no positive propensity to ill, the latter immediately takes place in our natures, and by the time we arrive to the years of moral discretion, we find ourselves one and all to have fallen a sacrifice to pollution. Jehovah could have implanted in us a propensity or tendency to virtue of sufficient strength to overcome the corruption of this state—but he has not done it. The supposed instinctive love of virtue, and the impulses of the moral sense, are evidently too weak for eventual security. Why God did not infuse a controlling propensity to holiness is to be resolved into his sovereignty and unfathomable councils; which might with great justice, and agreeable to the analogy of nature and daily experience, take occasion from Adam's offence, to with-hold from his posterity a favor which he had granted to Adam himself, and most probably had perpetuated to his posterity on the obedience of their fæderal head. This is an intricate subject—the reconciling the permission of moral and natural ill with the perfections of God—let it be brought about in what manner soever, since he had power to have prevented it. If therefore we should differ in our manner of accounting for it, and even if we should misconceive the scripture account of its origin (in which I apprehend it is clearly defined), and yet agree in the fact that disorder and moral depravity now reign in this part of God's universe, to a degree uncontrollable by man, perhaps we shall agree in the main thing.

3. I take it that we further agree that it is beyond the power of man to recover and save himself. Methinks a little attentive view of our state might convince us not only that there is no probability, but that there is an absolute impossibility of this world's emerging from its disorder, and recovering its original rectitude of itself. A spectator from yonder distant dominions of Jehovah might look down upon this world, and pronounce it utterly lost and



and undone beyond any possibility of self-recovery. He might see the principle of moral rectitude, even suppose it not quite extinct, yet so embarrassed as not possibly to regain its dominion. In this attempt the most enlightened and polished heathen nations, Greece and Rome, as well as the modern refiners in reasoning, have intirely failed. And as no general successful reformation, either of the moral principle or practice, is ever to be expected from mankind considered as a collective body, while in a state of nature unenlightened by a supernatural revelation; so there is but too much reason to believe the same thing holds true of individuals. And if we should be inclined to make an exception in favor of the pagan nations, we must have recourse to the effect of the dispensation of grace, thro' which, tho' unknown to them, the spirit might regenerate a principle of holiness in them.\* But even this would shew that nature alone is utterly impotent to this great change. With respect therefore to the recovery of the principle of holiness, as well as the extirpation of the principle of pollution, our nature left to itself is intirely impotent.

But towards our salvation, there is necessary another thing which I suppose we all agree is absolutely beyond human power, even in full perfection, I mean rendering atonement for sin. The œconomy of the kingdom of grace, and the designation of the son of God to the sovereignty of this world, the introduction of the offers of mercy, the exhibition of an example of perfect virtuous practice under all its embarrassment, the opening and setting up this kingdom; infinite wisdom it seems saw could not be effected without that humiliation of the son of God, his mediatorial obedience and vicarious sufferings, on which the dispensation of grace is meritoriously founded. This shews us that without the divine supernatural interposition, the world was absolutely lost and undone. The true



true nature of atonement is perhaps but imperfectly apprehended by us:—but methinks we might all see that, in whatever it consists, it is a thing beyond human power to render. Is it not blasphemy for a depraved helpless being to say he can do aught of himself which shall merit pardon of an offended God? Could he be perfect for the future, nay perform an overplus of virtue of merit equal to the demerit of his offences, yet on the foot of justice he could have no demand on the sovereign mercy of God. Divine justice is not thus to be bought and sold. But even Adam in innocence could perform no works of supererrogation, or more than his duty; and shall his impotent sons profanely boast that they can achieve a surplus of holiness for the satisfaction of divine justice? And consequently could we be supposed to have power to become holy the rest of our lives, there remains a load of past sins uncanceled, undischarged, whose penalties we are liable to.

It is beyond our power then to lay the foundation of our redemption, which Jesus Christ has laid in the propitiatory sacrifice of himself. Equally unable are we, without the divine assistance, to those terms and conditions appointed to be found in us, towards our receiving the atonement and becoming entitled to the blessings of this sacrifice. Otherwise the illuminations of the holy Ghost had not been by infinite wisdom judged necessary to accomplish on the human mind the great work of *conviction, repentance, faith, and regeneration*. As the *atonement* is the foundation of our discharge from the future penalties of moral evil; so *faith* is the appointed condition of limiting the atonement to us; and *renovation* of nature is necessary to the enjoyment of the future blessedness. Had I time I might enlarge on the description of this divine principle, its formation and exercise, as it affects our spiritual powers and passions, which are directed, restricted to and placed upon new moral objects, new pursuits, new enjoyments.

4 We agree that JESUS CHRIST is the great redeemer, and that he is God as well as man—in a word, we agree in the doctrines of the divinity and atonement of Jesus Christ. We agree in our idea of his person, offices and mediation. However we may differ in explaining the mysteries of the hypostatic union, yet we agree in the divinity of Christ to all practical purposes—particularly in his *omnipotence*; and that religious honor and *divine worship* are to be ascribed to the son, believing it to be the will of heaven *that all men honor the son, even as they do the father*. We believe him according to the scriptures to be the second person in the ever-adorable trinity, the brightness of the father's glory, and the express image of his person:—that he is the eternal son of God, the only begotten of his father, full of grace and truth; for in him dwelt the godhead bodily:—that he is the eternal logos, who was in the beginning with God, and who was God, by whom all things were made, and without whom nothing was made that was made;—that to him is committed all power in heaven and earth, who therefore is God over all blessed forever:—that his subordination in order of trinity is consistent with perfect equality to the father, that so he and the father are one, partaking in and enjoying the same essential glories and perfections:—that he dwelt in eternal glory with the father before the world was;—that though he laid aside the peculiar glories of divinity which he enjoyed in the bosom of the father upon his condescending to appear in our nature; yet when he dwelt with us, he was God manifest in the flesh, the representative and true exemplification of Deity, particularly in his perfections of *wisdom, infallibility and omnipotence*. Whence it appears that he was all-sufficient to the great undertaking, the work of redemption.

On the foresight of the apostacy of man and his helpless ruin, the eternal son is represented as saying to the father, "Lo! here am I, ready to do thy will, O God! ready

" on



“on the part of mankind to perform that for their redemption, which is necessary to be rendered to thy divine justice, and which they are totally unable to render;—ready to undertake, to suffer, and execute all that the sovereignty of thy administration demands, both as to atoning for their revolt, and recovering them to obedience and filial submission to thy will.” In consequence of this eternal covenant between the father and the son, Jesus the great Emanuel laid aside the glory he had with the father, humbled himself to appear in our nature, and performed that scene of illustrious obedience and suffering, which, in the counsels of heaven, was stipulated the meritorious foundation of deriving the most inestimable blessings to the true believer. He rendered complete atonement for sin in the sacrifice of himself—brought in everlasting righteousness—published the joyful tidings of pardon and reconciling grace—gave a most wise and heavenly institution of morals—brought life and immortality to light through his gospel—appointed the baptismal and sacramental rites—commissioned his disciples, and then ascended to the Father’s presence, where he now exercises the intercessorial part of his mediation, and will continue to exercise it till he shall return and take upon him the more open and immediate dominion of the virtuous.

5. We agree in the influences and operations of the spirit, the third person in the adorable trinity concerned in man’s redemption, whose more immediate province is the application of this redemption to the soul. Jesus Christ having begun this good work, does not desert it. Had he forsaken it after his leaving the world, it had proved abortive. He sowed the good seed in one part of the great field of the world, and leaves it to propagate and spread as the spirit breaks up the fallow ground, and prepares one nation after another to receive it. The same thing is to be done for individuals as for nations: Tho’ evangelical truth is of a regenerating influence when

brought home to the soul, or as Lord *Bacon* expresses it, "to our bosoms;" yet the human mind is to be first prepared and softened to the genial impressions of truth, which would be inefficacious alone. By an access to, and operation on, the human intellect, which we cannot define, the spirit, as we are informed by revelation, dispels the mists which becloud and darken the understanding; and, being duly attended to, leads us to discern and feel the force of the truth as it is in Jesus. And thus he brings the soul, after a previous moral process, to two great principles, distinct in their nature and connexions, though inseparably conjoined in the soul of a christian, I mean, saving *faith* and the principle of *regeneration* we have been speaking of. By the one I mean, not the lax indefinite faith of a superficial education, tho' this must be allowed to have had a good effect upon the world;—not the cursory belief, or rather non-disbelief, of Jesus and his religion, with which debauchees and devils *believe, tremble, and sin* away;—and least of all, not that deistical faith by which we assent equally to the dictates of Jesus, of Plato, of Aristotle, of Mahomet, and Bolingbroke, and to neither as supernaturally authorized to instruct and govern man:—but, besides the honest and sober belief of revelation in general, I mean the assiance of the soul in Jesus Christ; that act of the human mind, by which, in consequence of our being intirely convinced that Jesus is appointed our redeemer and king, we humbly accept and submit to him as such—that act by which the soul, from a sense of its lost state and inability to save itself, full of the ravishing views of the all-sufficiency of Jesus, and the benevolent invitations of the gospel, humbly comes to Christ, repairs to him as the ark of safety, receives and embraces and lays hold on him as the only hope set before it, in virtue of whose propitiation and meritorious righteousness alone it trusts for acceptance with the father. The other principle I mentioned was *regeneration*, in which



which the soul in all its powers and affections is purified, refined and created anew in Christ Jesus: a love and complacency in virtue is generated, a strong prevalent and governing affection for holiness, a prevailing tendency to moral rectitude: in a word, a spark of the divine nature is infused and lights up the principle of divine love and benevolence, that distinguishing part of the moral image of God in which he created man. These principles, *faith* and *regeneration*, are supported thro' the whole course of the religious life, by the same energies of the holy spirit that at first formed them. Again,

6. I suppose we are further agreed in the consequences and connexions of these two principles—the one in governing a holy life, and exemplifying or rather diversifying itself in all the graces and ornaments of the moral behavior:—the other in our *justification*, or intitling us, not by way of merit, but according to the constitution of grace, to all the benefits of the mediatorial atonement.

Faith is the appointed term in us which limits and appropriates the atonement. But it must be sincere, unfeigned, and attended with a holy life. *He that believes shall be saved.* It is through faith that we become so united to the meritorious redeemer, as to receive and share in the benefits of his most illustrious virtue:—which, besides a discharge from punishment, entitles to inestimable glories, privileges and happiness, over and above the peculiar rewards which God will graciously bestow on our personal virtue & holiness—These last are intirely distinct from the high privileges and glorious beatifying dignity and advancement, which are derived to believers on account of their connexion with such an illustrious personage in the moral world, as the eternal son of God. *Thus they that receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one Jesus Christ.* To these glories justification opens the way. In the scriptures it is connected, not with the principle of regeneration, not with its subse-

quent holy life, but with *faith* only : not that *faith* is alone, but however attended with other good principles, it is *faith* only with which justification is connected. This is the appointed term, which, being found in us, entails our redemption, on our part compleats our title to all the benefits of the mediatorial obedience. There are indeed some different apprehensions among us on this subject. We all agree that Christ is the great propitiation : — we do not place the propitiation in *faith* or *good works*. The only question then is, what is the condition and appointed term in us which entitles us to the benefits and fruits of Christ's righteousness ? It is agreed on all hands, that whatever it is, it is not however meritorious ; nor is the connexion between this term and receiving the atonement so necessary as to preclude the sovereignty of grace. Now to this condition, whatever it is, as well as to the righteousness of Christ, and the grace of God, the scripture indifferently gives the appellation "*justifying*." The apostle Paul speaking of this conditional term in us, says, "being justified by *faith* : " — St. James speaking of the conditional term says, "ye see then how by *works* a man is justified, and not by *faith* only : " — the apostle speaking of the procuring cause and meritorious foundation of justification says, "being justified by his *blood* : " — speaking of the source and origin of it in the sovereign and free mercy of God, he says, "being justified freely by his *grace* through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ." It is to be observed, that the Hebrew christians trusted for justification to the works of the law. In opposition to this, the apostles endeavoured to bring them off from this vain trust, to place their sole dependance on Christ's atonement and sacrifice once for all — reaching them that *faith* was the only term of being entitled to the benefits of this atonement, without the deeds of the Mosaic law. Some Gentile converts seeing so much stress laid on *faith*, and neglect of the *law*, forgot the distinction between the temporary and already abrogated laws of



of Moses, and the perpetuity of the moral law, and so ran into the extreme of trusting to faith alone, and by itself. This is the error saint James corrects, by shewing that *faith being alone is dead*; and that it is only such a living faith as influences to virtue, which is justifying. Not that faith is to be trusted to as meriting justification, any more than the good works it produces. To rectify still further this early abuse of faith, the apostle calls up the chief attention to a holy life or good works, not to the works of the law, but of evangelical obedience, and speaks of them as a condition of justification jointly with faith. It is evident indeed that a life of good acts is preferable in point of excellence and value, to the one single good act of faith: but as real faith opens the virtuous life, and determines the future tendency of the character, infinite wisdom has seen fit to make it on our part the characteristic condition or term of justification. These things do not bow to our reason, much less to our reveries. The proper and indeed only question is, what faith the scripture? What is the term and condition prescribed by God? If faith, or good works, separately or conjunctly—we are to submit. By good works it is to be remembered we agree to understand a *holy and godly life, a life governed by a real principle of grace*; and whether this good and pious life, or the faith which is the basis of it, be the term of justification is the inquiry? And the doubt in this age arises from the misconception of a controversy in the apostolic age. We apply what the apostle spake of the ceremonial temporary law of Moses, to the eternal laws of moral virtue. It is granted when the apostle says, “by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified” that it is equally true in strictness both of the laws of Moses and the laws of Jesus—but upon the temporary laws of the former only he had his eye. And when he is on the other hand shewing that the gentiles who had never practised the rites of Moses, might yet be justified as well

well as the jews, he says, "We conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." The laws of Moses are exempt in both cases—it was just a matter of indifference, whether they were jews or gentiles, whether they practiced the law or not—they were all to be justified by faith, and not by the deeds of the law. In truth, I suppose faith alone is the condition of justification, as good works are of the rewards, but neither meritorious. The deeds of the law which St. Paul depreciates as of no value, not only in point of justification, but in every other sense; and which he counts as dross and dung, are evidently not that piety and moral virtue which he universally inculcates. And as it is impossible to ascertain the genuineness of faith but by revelation, or subsequent obedience, and revelations have now ceased;—so in effect, towards the moral comfort, a conscientious and virtuous life is to be attended to and treated very much as if it was the condition of pardon. And if any trust to good works for justification, in the same manner as others trust to faith for justification, as a condition only of receiving the atonement, it is not essentially erroneous, since in either case the trust and dependance, with regard to the meritorious cause, is in the righteousness of Christ, and this only. Did our trusting to good works or to faith alone lead off our supreme dependence from the sacrifice and righteousness of Christ—should we in our dependence substitute either *faith* or *holiness* in the stead of Christ's atonement; or in the same sense trust to the *merit of faith* or *holiness* for justification, as we all agree to trust to the merits of Christ; it would be as essential a departure from the christian method of recovery, as to trust to jewish sacrifices, and the righteousness which is of the law of Moses. But there are no such notions or sentiments prevailing in this land. Indeed we are a little puzzled about the term and condition *in us* of our being intitled to the atonement; but we universally depend on the atonement as  
the



the meritorious foundation of our acceptance and justification. Thus we have considered the consequences by the grace of God connected with faith in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The consequences connected with the *principle of virtue*, begotten in *regeneration*, are first, the subsequent life of virtue, and secondly its rewards. This principle resembles the moral perfection of the supreme intelligence, and is the basis of universal virtue and universal happiness throughout the moral world. All pure intelligences of every subordination partake of it in their measure, and are actuated by it. When prevalent in man, it as necessarily and naturally influences and impels to a life of holiness, as a polluted principle when prevalent impels to a life of vice. It naturally tends to perpetuate itself; yet through the embarrassments of a corrupted world, it would decline and come to nothing, if it was not upheld by its divine author. Whence the perseverance of saints is not to be ascribed to the indissoluble perpetuity of the principle of grace, but to the promise and continually sustaining power of God. A course of holy obedience and heavenly conduct is pleasurable and delightful, and evidential of the reality of grace in the heart, and the steadiness of our faith:—this is the present benefit of good works:—but besides this, their most essential connections are the *rewards*. The good the gracious principle is not in any measure to be rewarded, like the good works it produces. Hence the book of the revelation represents that at the final adjustment, men are to be rewarded, not according to their faith (this has quite a different connexion, viz. justification), not according to the principle of grace, but according to the good works which flow from it:—this not of merit, but of the free, rich and sovereign grace of God. In God's administration, *grace* and *reward* are not inconsistent. The final rewards of virtue are as much of grace, as the bestowment of justification on faith, or the giving both faith, repentance, and regeneration,

regeneration. But though these rewards are of grace, yet God has been pleased to inform us that the rule he prescribes to himself, is to apportion them to the degrees of sanctity. Thus the whole of our salvation is grace—*by grace are ye saved, through faith, that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.* Hence,

7. We agree in inculcating and recommending a life of practical religion, a life of purity, holiness and moral virtue.

We earnestly recommend private & public devotion, family religion, and pious education of children—that the light of our good examples may shine around us, and excite others to glorify our heavenly father. We endeavour to cultivate a reverential and undissembled homage of the most high, together with unconfined, generous and diffusive benevolence, which shall render this life social and pleasant, and qualify us for the future association with the spirits of just men made perfect. And to animate us to this, we fail not to paint the glories of paradise and the charms of virtue, and to exhibit such sublime and exalted views of the moral government of God, as may charm and allure us to that conduct which is the supreme honor of our natures.

8. We further agree, that, however impotent and helpless we are of ourselves, yet if any sinner, even in an unregenerate state, will use the appointed means of recovery, he may be encouraged to hope for that further aid and success which will terminate in his final salvation. Nor that the sinner can regenerate himself;—but instead of sitting down in sloth, as if he had nothing to do, no encouragement to labor for the meat that endureth to everlasting life, he ought to be up and doing, and work out his salvation with fear and trembling, knowing, that on his faithful improvement of the talents and advantages he enjoys, it is God that worketh in him both *to will and to do* of his own good pleasure. He should use the appointed means of religious contemplation on his state, and duly attend to the eternal consequences of moral action, whether virtuous



or vicious : like a rational and immortal being, he should deliberate on the tendency, event and issue of his behaviour. He should consider that, by his almighty lawgiver and judge, he is placed on this theatre of action to sustain in the view of mortal and immortal beings a certain character, and that the part he acts has final connexions of the most important moment. He should read the scriptures to learn the way of life, the terms of acceptance. He should not neglect the duty of attending and hearing the word, and above all of humble prayer and supplication to the father of lights, for the illuminations of his holy spirit, to enlighten his mind, that he may clearly discern those rich and attracting discoveries of redeeming love, which may beget faith and renovation of soul. He should labor for such just and affecting views of the folly of vice, and the excellency and wisdom of virtue, as may terminate in abhorrence of the one, and a complacency in the other. From the just humility and self-abasement which attends a thorough conviction of sin, there will be an easy and irresistible transition to that joyful and unreserved surrender of the soul to God, which on our part completes the title to blessedness.

Let no one then be discouraged and say, that he cannot pray to God acceptably, or ask in sincerity. For though the pure and sublime sincerity exercised by a soul under the full ravishing discoveries of the gospel, cannot be expected in the unregenerate ; yet if ever their prayers are answered, their imperfect sincerity is accepted : and it is evident that they are, because with the last humble aspiration of the soul antecedent to conversion, is connected the imparting regenerating grace. In a word, God would not call upon us indiscriminately to ask mercy of him, if he did not indiscriminately grant it. The connexion between our petitions and the imparting of grace to the unregenerate, no more interferes with the sovereignty of God, than the connexions of blessing with the petitions

tions of the godly. All that man receives is free, unmerited grace. And if the *promises* are a peculiar favor reserved for the saints; there are *encouragements* however to the unregenerate, to turn from their evil ways and seek God, who giveth grace to the humble. Jesus Christ came to *call sinners* to repentance; and with the gracious invitations he makes to them, he says, *ask and ye shall receive*—and again, *whosoever will let him come*:—the sealing the vision and the prophecy was with an universal invitation to all freely to come and be happy in paradise, in that pathetic, earnest and affectionate address to mortals, “I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things—and the spirit and the bride say, *COME*. And let him that heareth say, *COME*. And let him that is athirst, *COME*. And *whosoever will* let him take the water of life *freely*.” Come all mankind, whosoever will let him come. These invitations are not to the virtuous only, but to a whole wicked debauched world, whosoever will let him come to Jesus and be happy: let him come and make a humble surrendery of himself to him whose right it is to reign, whose is the sovereignty and just dominion of man, and he shall be accepted. These invitations are conceived in language as strong as the promises. However at least there are encouragements to sinners—and the encouragements of a God are as infallible and equally to be depended upon as his promises.

The use of means is necessary in our beginning the religious life, for our confirmation in faith, and for the subsequent culture in virtue.

9. To close our agreement in doctrinal principles we believe the *resurrection* of the dead, the future *judgment*, and final retribution. The spirits of men “when separated from their bodies, will not drop into a state of inactivity, insensibility:—separate souls will pass into the unseen world of unbodied spirits, and be subject to the laws and government, to the work and rewards of that world:



“ world : they will during that state of separation be ei-  
 “ ther united to the society of angels, and happy souls,  
 “ or be herded with the degraded angels, and unhappy  
 “ spirits of dead men : they will during this state of death,  
 “ either tremble at the foresight of their re-union to their  
 “ antient bodies, or wait and long in this state of expec-  
 “ tancy for the redemption of their bodies.\*” I must  
 beg leave to proceed a little further, and add,  
 10. That we agree in the two positive institutions of  
*Baptism* and the *Lord's-Supper*. As to the communion,  
 we do not prostitute it to the vicious and debauched, but  
 restrict it to persons of sobriety, faith and virtue : and for  
 the posture, according to the example of Christ and his  
 apostles, we celebrate it *sitting* around the Lord's table.  
 We agree not only in the baptism of adult believers, but  
 of their infant seed. However incapable they are of  
 instruction and faith, yet Jesus Christ in saying, *of such is*  
*the kingdom of heaven*, as we take it, asserts that they are  
 capable of enjoying the blessings of his spiritual kingdom—  
 capable of admission into it—and of consequence capable  
 of the initiatory seal by which all are to be received into his  
 kingdom. They may be intitled to great blessings, tho'  
 not by their own act, yet by the seal of initiation, by which  
 they are embodied into that catholic community of the  
 virtuous, which having the patronage of Jesus will in the  
 issue appear to be not only the most honorable incorpora-  
 tion in this part of the moral world, but to imply interests  
 and connexions of great moment. As for the mode of  
 baptism we universally perform it by *affusion* or sprinkling  
 —but whether it be done thus, or by *immersion*, we do  
 not hold it essential. And as the chief difference between  
 the *Baptists* and us is respecting the subjects, viz. Infants,  
 on which good and sensible learned men have judged va-  
 riously ; so there begins to be a good harmony and friend-  
 ly correspondence between the catholic and charitable of  
 both denominations, which I hope will continue and in-

crease; and this benevolence is intirely consistent with our adhering to our respective denominations.

II. We agree in the belief of the inspiration of the scriptures—we believe that they contain an authentic and the only infallible account of the whole system of revelation made from Time to Time to mankind—and that they are a *sufficient* rule of faith and practice. Our churches, God be thanked, are not yet deeply tinged with deism—may God preserve them pure! And as they yet retain the popular belief of revelation, which will abide the most severe scrutiny, so they accept the scriptures as an infallible rule. It is indeed a little unhappy, that, like others in the christian world, some of us are fond of substituting human interpretations given by authority of councils and learned men, exacting that the sacred scriptures be understood according to senses fitted and defined in human tests, which all acknowledge to be fallible. But it is to be hoped that we shall stand fast in the liberty wherewith the gospel has made us free. There ought to be no restrictions on the conscience of an honest and sober believer of revelation. The right of conscience and private judgment is unalienable; and it is truly the interest of all mankind to unite themselves into one body, for the liberty, free exercise and unmolested enjoyment of this right, especially in religion. Not all the difference of sentiment, not all the erroneous opinions that have yet been started, afford just umbrage for its extinction, abridgement or embarrassment. Have the protestant formularies subserved the defence of the truth as it is in Jesus?—Rather have they not in event proved new sources of religious dispute and undeterminable controversy? The churches of *Geneva* have long since had the wisdom to drop their article of *consensus*, as the great disturbance of the christian harmony. And the clergy have found themselves obliged to interpret the *Helvetic*, and all other protestant confessions, in the scripture sense, with a *divinis veritatibus in hoc libro contentis subscribo*:



*subscribo*.—I am satisfied we shall err less if we make the scriptures the only rule of faith, than if we depart from this, and substitute another; or as many do, who say they believe the scriptures the *only* rule, and yet in all their judgments on scripture, measure that *only* rule by *another* rule. Nor do substituted rules answer the purpose of detecting heretics at all better than the primary rule, since on experience it is found none more freely subscribe and swear to human tests than deists, sceptics and the most debauched. If God's inclosure will not keep out the erroneous, can it be expected that ours will? The universal pretext is a preservation against heresy. But it is to be remarked, that human tests make more heretics than the word of God—all that the one determines to be heresy, is not heresy by the scriptures. A man may be a very great heretic according to the one, and an excellent christian according to the other at the same time. St. Paul was one of the greatest heretics, and even gloried in his heresy, and yet was one of the best of christians. The *Waldenses* were heretics. The *protestants* are all heretics with the *romanists*, according to the council of *Trent*. All that can be advanced for public human tests among protestants, can and has been advanced with equal force for those of the *romanists*: for it is not so much the real truth or error contained in these tests and formularies that is contested, as the authority by which they are imposed, which is only human, and therefore not obligatory on conscience. Though we have reason to be thankful that all the protestant formularies\* are so agreeable to scripture as they are; yet they give decisions on some things which the scripture has not determined, and on which not only the heterodox, but the most orthodox and learned divines have different sentiments—and in other things they are too imperfect to be adopted by christians as a standard and criterion of christian truth: and

and ever have been looked upon among the sensible part of mankind, as having no more weight and authority in forming our religious opinion, our judgment on true religion, than any other human composition, as sermons, bodies of divinity, treatises on the great doctrines of christianity—and as having no more claim than these to infallibility. God be thanked we are not embarrassed with subscriptions and oaths to uninspired rules for defining truth, in this land of liberty, where the *SCRIPTURES* are professedly our *ONLY RULE*.

12. Again, We agree in the sufficiency and validity of presbyterian ordination. This was the ordination practised by the apostles, and among the primitive christians of the first and second centuries.—This is agreeable to scripture:—was introduced into our churches at the beginning;—and this has continued our practice ever since. The *apostolic* order was appointed in virtue of a supernatural commission and dispensation, which ceased at the death of St. John. During these supernatural communications of the holy Ghost, many were divinely, I mean supernaturally, called to the work of the ministry, besides the apostles; and were to this end endowed with the gift of tongues and other miraculous powers. As the converts multiplied and formed into religious assemblies or meetings, the holy Ghost appointed overseers and pastors to instruct and feed the flock of God, to perform baptisms and administer the communion. And these were indifferently called presbyters or elders, teachers, bishops, pastors. The elders of Ephesus are stiled bishops, Acts 20. 28. So the elders of Philippi are called bishops, Philip. 1. 1. The elders are to take the oversight of the flock, *episcopantes*, doing the work of a bishop. It cannot be supposed, that the city and church of Ephesus within the first three years had sundry diocesan bishops; and yet the apostle calls the elders of that church bishops. These things convince us that scripture bishops, and elders or pastors, are of the same order



order and office, Dr. Hammond says, "there were no presbyters of an inferior order instituted by the apostles." And the learned Dr. Stillingfleet made this noble concession "that there were no bishops during the apostles' life" meaning no diocesan bishops in the sense of the latin church. We are confirmed in this from considering what this office was in the synagogue, from whence it was adopted into the church. The head or president of the synagogues superintended the public reading and explications of the law and the prophets, and performed the public offices of devotion and preaching \*. This officer in the hebrew synagogues was called *Chazzan*; and in the hellenistic synagogues *Episcopus*, a bishop; and sometimes *Sbeliach Tfibbor*, angel of the church, who never had the charge of more than one congregation, so that there was as many bishops as synagogues. In the first forming of a synagogue, the Chazzan was elected by the members, and ordained by the imposition of hands of the elders of the synagogue. Afterwards the succession obtained in the appointment of the Chuzan who ordained his successor by imposition of hands, an antient rite of consecration to a religious office. It does not appear that the Chuzan was ever appointed by the Sanhedrin. Nor does it appear that the synagogues or their officers were of divine appointment: since the oracular responses of Urim and Thummim, and the other supernatural communications ceased before their institution. The ceremonies of *anointing* and *imposition of hands* originally implied an authoritative designation from heaven. The tribe of *Levi* was consecrated to the levitical office, and the family of *Aaron* to the priestly office by *imposition of hands*, implying an authoritative designation from heaven. *Saul* and *David* were designated to the regal office by the ceremony of *anointing with Oyl*. *Barnabas* and *Paul* were separated to the apostolic office by *prayer and the imposition of hands*.

There  
 \* Lewis Antiq. Heb. V. 2. p. 428 and Basnage.

These were supernatural designations, and clothed the respective officers with a proper divine authority. And these rites of initiation into the real and pastoral office were retained, and probably were set forth as examples, and intended by God to be retained in the kingdoms and churches of succeeding ages, when the authoritative designation was left to men. The apostles took early care to furnish examples for perpetual imitation in the churches, by leaving the designation of the pastors to the free election of the churches—using the same rites in setting apart those appointed by the churches, as in consecrating those that were supernaturally called and appointed by heaven. There is a great difference between imitating the ancient divine appointments, and acting under a direct divine appointment. Samuel and the prophets anointed kings *jure divino*: but we do not now imagine that when a bishop anoints a king in these ages, that he does it *jure divino*, or confers any divine authority on the regal character. It is but *imitative* of the few instances of extraordinary regal appointment in the jewish monarchy. So the imposition of hands in the ordination of pastors, which is held *indifferent* in several reformed churches, implies no supernatural appointment to the pastoral office; and is in like manner *imitative* only of the ancient ceremonies of consecration, and the few instances of extraordinary appointment in the apostolic age, and at the first setting up of christianity. The period of extraordinary appointment to the regal office was at most from Samuel to the dissolution of the hebrew monarchies in their respective captivities. The period for like appointment of the pastors is limited to the few instances of the first century, or at most to the period of miraculous powers. Since these periods both have been *imitative only*, the ceremony of pastoral investiture was from the beginning performed by co-ordinate presbyters or pastors; with whom the apostles left the conferring holy orders in



all the succeeding ages of the church. Thus pure and uncorrupted antiquity is on the side of ordination by co-equal presbyters. *Clemens Romanus* and *Polycarp* speak of bishops and elders as of the same order and office. *Jerome* and *Hilary* are on our side, by the consent of all who are acquainted with ecclesiastical antiquity. And in the church of *Alexandria*, presbyterian ordination only was practiced for two hundred years.

Indeed, in justice and candor to our protestant episcopal brethren, it must be acknowledged that the distinction between *bishops* and *presbyters*, both as to order and powers, began early in some parts of the christian church. And the antiquity and figure of diocesan episcopacy, which obtained for ages throughout the christian church, would have been an argument invincible, were it not for the total silence of SCRIPTURE, and the certainty that the scripture ordinations were performed by presbyters, and its making no difference between the offices and powers of bishops and elders.\* St. Paul refers Timothy to the gift he had received by the laying on the hands of the presbytery or elders, not to the power received from himself as an apostle assisting in ordination as a superior officer. The elders who laboured in word and doctrine, assisted in the ordination of pastors in other churches besides their own. The apostles, and Timothy and Titus, in ordaining elders in every city, acted as elders only, not in virtue of the supernatural communication of miraculous gifts—tho' these were frequently imparted in the presbyterian ordinations of the apostolic age:—This however did not constitute any part of that pastoral character which was to be of standing perpetuity in the church. The manner of the apostles and primitive presbyters was this; when in their travels, or the vicinity of their stated labors, there appeared a body of christians profelyted by themselves or the antient evangelists, some of the brotherhood were

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chosen

\* Bp. Downam on the Ministry, p. 8.

chosen to the pastoral office and oversight or episcopacy of the congregation—these the apostles or any other presbyters consecrated in presbyterian ordinations as *fellow labourers*. Thus Titus was left to travel *Crete*, and as a presbyter himself to ordain presbyterian bishops, i.e. pastors in every city. Thus the original episcopacy was the pastorate of a single congregation. The hierarchy of the greek and latin churches after the apostolic age resolved the body of ecclesiastics into subordinations unknown to the apostles, who left but one order of instructors, that of elders, with power to perpetuate themselves in the election of the people to the second coming of Christ.

At the reformation it was so generally conceded that presbyterian ordination was the original practice, that it had universally obtained but for the *dignities* and *revenues*. As much as this, on the part of England, is implied in the reasonings of Dr. MADDOX the late bp. of Worcester:—upon whose reasonings a parliamentary establishment of *presbytery*, in the reign of Q. Elizabeth, had been as consonant to *scripture* and *primitive* antiquity, as that of *prelacy*, had it been as agreeable to three-fourths of the body of the clergy as it was to one fourth.

“ The judgment of the foreign churches of the re-  
 “ formed is evident from the harmony of their confessions,  
 “ which assert an equality in all gospel ministers. The  
 “ sense of the protestant churches of the *german empire*  
 “ may be well known from those articles called the  
 “ *Smalcaldic* \*; in which the equality of ordaining pow-  
 “ er by divine right is asserted to belong to presbyters;  
 “ which was subscribed by *three electors, forty-five noble-*  
 “ *men, the consuls and senators of thirty-five cities, and a*  
 “ *vast number of divines*. At home in our nation the  
 “ reformers asserted the same equality of power by divine  
 “ right. We have Dr. *Cranmer's* judgment for it by Dr.  
 “ *Stillingfleet*: and in the book called the *erudition of*

“ *the*

\* Skiden.



“ the christian man, which was drawn up by the body of  
 “ the clergy, approved by both houses of parliament, and  
 “ published by the King’s command, it is asserted that  
 “ priests and bishops by God’s law are one and the same.  
 “ and that the power of ordination belongs equally to both.†”

And as to the present practice of the protestant world ;  
 the Lutheran superintendents are confessedly but *primi*  
*inter pares*, and consequently their ordination is truly pres-  
 byterian. Lutheranism is the establishment of the two  
 sovereignties of Sweden and Denmark, which include the  
 kingdom of Norway. Two of the three religions, or  
 rather forms of religion established in the german empire  
 at the treaty of Westphalia, A. D. 1648, were *Luthera-*  
*nism* and *Calvinism*. The *superintendents* were ordained  
 by *presbyters* only. *Luther* and *Melancton*, who were  
 only *presbyters*, ordained several. And in *Denmark*,  
*Burgenhagius*, who was the great instrument of the refor-  
 mation in that kingdom, ordained *seven* bishops or super-  
 intendents at one time ; and yet he was only a *presbyter*.  
*Calvin* headed the reformation in France ; but being o-  
 bliged to flee persecution, he repaired to Geneva, and  
 assisted in completing the work begun by *Zuinglius*,  
 among the *halvætic* churches. The churches of *France*,  
*Geneva*, and the *Swiss* cantons all agreed in doctrine and  
 the abolition of prelacy and ecclesiastical subordination—  
 and from the commencement of the reformation practiced  
 ordination by *presbyters*. The *Dutch* and *Walloon* re-  
 formed of the united provinces, which in the year 1560  
 amounted to 2190 churches, all agree in *presbyterian*  
 ordination ; so do the 450 churches of the canton of *Berne*,  
 as well as the rest of the *Swiss* protestants : and so do  
 the 938 churches of *Scotland*. Our congregational bre-  
 thren the dissenters in *England*, which at the revolution  
 are said to have composed a body of about 2000 churches ;  
 —These I say, and the large body of our brethren the  
 E 2 *presbyterian*

† Pemberton.

|| Dissent. Gent. Ans. 84.

presbyterian and congregational dissenters in the north of Ireland—all agree in presbyterian ordination:—add to these our protestant brethren the *Baptists*, in *Britain* and the *United Provinces* especially, with whom we have the happiness of agreeing as to ordination by presbyters or elders. I have not collected the numbers of the protestant churches in the world which practise ordination by presbyters—tho' it is certain they far exceed in numbers that respectable body in our own nation which retain and practise episcopal as distinguished from presbyterian ordination. Nay, exclusive of the Lutherans who seem to retain a species of episcopacy, the reformed presbyterian churches comprehend double the number of souls to those of the british episcopacy. Tho' strictly speaking, the whole protestant world, except the church of England, agree in the validity of presbyterian ordination. If therefore the matter was to be decided by numbers, it must resolve in our favor by a very ample majority—tho' truly not numbers, but the *scriptures alone* ought to decide the truth. It however must be confessed no small satisfaction to find the largest body of protestants on our side, in imitating the apostolic practice in this as well as some other things, of which we are sometimes upbraided—as particularly to mention but one more here, the omission of Liturgies and rendering our addresses to God in that most natural as well as christian and apostolic manner of *free prayer* and extemporaneous devotion. In these disquisitions we initiate our posterity the rising generation, not with a view of interfering with any protestant sect, but upon the principles of conscience and self-defence. We desire to live in peace and harmony with all—nor do we attempt to proselite from any communion. We desire only equal protestant liberty. And even our episcopal brethren must confess that we treat them with much greater lenity, charity, and christian benevolence, than they treat our congregational brethren in England. And in general the declamations



declamations on the superior excellency and purity of the church established in south Britain, necessitate us to adduce the equal excellency and purity of that established for north Britain, with which we have the happiness so nearly to agree. And as the parliamentary establishments of neither of these extend to the british American provinces, so every sect have a right here to vindicate their peculiar forms. And tho' we judge that the *congregational* is equal at least in excellency and purity to the *episcopal, presbyterian, classical* or any other forms, with all which we agree in essentials, yet we exercise this judgment and our defences upon it, with the most generous and perfect benevolence to all our protestant brethren, especially those who are evidently sincere and conscientious; knowing that they may be equally honest, and have equally the right of private judgment with ourselves.

13. We agree that every voluntary christian assembly have an inherent right, a power which ought neither to be *surrendered nor controlled*, of *electing* its own officers, such as *pastors*, or elders, and *deacons*. Happily different from most of the reformed churches, we are possessed of this most valuable privilege, which tho' they asserted, they could not retain.\* Ministers are not imposed upon our churches. It had been happy for all the christian world, had the filling up of pastoral vacancies remained, as the apostles settled it, and as our fathers wisely settled it for us, in the uncontrollable election of the church and congregation. Our fathers would not suffer a sister church, or body of sister churches, to lord it over one another, or hold a negative on one another's elections and pastoral investitures. In this they agreed with apostolic, uncorrupted antiquity. The first vacancy in the apostleship was filled up by the election of the 120 brethren—*they*, the brethren, *appointed two*; and *they*, the brethren, *gave forth* the heavenly directed *lots*. So the choice of deacons, as well

\* Harmonia Confessionum passim.

as pastors, was in fraternal election : The twelve called the multitude unto them and said, *brethren look you out seven men, whom we may appoint or ordain*—and the saying pleased the *whole multitude*, and *they chose* Stephen \*. And in ordaining elders or stated pastors in every city, the universal custom was to consecrate those whom the brethren first elected. Nor do we ever find the apostles or neighbouring pastors ever negatived a popular election ; but universally ordained such men to the ministry as by the choice of the congregation appeared to be men of *good report*. So the churches of New-England chuse their own pastors, who are ordained or consecrated, as *Eusebius* expresses it, “ with the common consent of the bishops of the vicinity.” And it is greatly to be desired that all newly introduced ministers be agreeable to the pastors of the vicinity, as a mutual harmony among *fellow-labourers* must greatly subserve the common cause.

When it is said, Acts xiv. 23, *they ordained them elders in every church*, it is evident from the known custom of the *Keirotomia*, in the athenian democracy, that it ought to be rendered to this effect, *leading the people to the choice of elders in every church, by the lifting up of hands*. The apostles, in the opinion of Dr. Cotton Mather, only presided, and the people under their inspection elected. This *Keirotomia* is the practice of our churches. The ceremony of consecration was the imposition of hands with prayer. This simple process compleated the pastoral investiture, and made a minister of Jesus Christ.

The original custom settled by the apostles, was not worn out in several centuries : Ignatius writing to the church in Philadelphia, tells them, that it belonged to them to chuse their pastor. All antiquity confesses the part which the people had in the election of their pastors. The council of *Calcedon*, speaking of the church of *Ephesus*, said, *that such a bishop should be given them as should*

\* Acts vi. 2.



be elected by those whom he was to feed.\* Constantine wrote to the people of *Nicomedia*, that it was in their power to make choice of what pastor they pleased. It is a celebrated saying of *Cyprian*, in explaining *Acts i. 26.* to confirm the power of the people in chusing and refusing their officers, "*Plebs christiana maxime protestatem habet vel dignos sacerdotes elegendi, vel indignos recusandi*"——the highest power of electing worthy pastors, and rejecting the unworthy, is in the people. A council in the VIIth century makes the ordination of a bishop to be void, when he is not elected by the people. Even in *Rome* itself, the people elected their bishop 'till the XIIth century. And popular elections of ministers continued 'till *Charlemagne*. Before this time indeed the privilege was in a great measure deformed from some churches. For after the miraculous powers, the clergy encroached on this principle, especially as the benefices became opulent. But they did not complete the acquisition, 'till that immense wealth, which they intrigued into their hands in the ecclesiastical revenues, gave them a weight which could no longer be resisted. This sacerdotal ascendancy, and irresistible influence, commenced from small beginnings and gentle encroachments. From such small beginnings, as recommending the advice of neighbouring pastors in the choice of a minister; they proceeded, as this custom obtained, to *claim* and *demand* such application for advice, as a pastoral right; and from claiming it as a right, advanced to hold a negative on the elections of neighbouring churches; and afterwards in the light of councils, which have proved the grand sources of corruption and tyranny, they beheld it for the public good and conservation of the faith, that they should be vested with the sole disposal of pastoral vacancies. In the subsequent ages of the church, those who founded the revenues, whether states or private persons, assumed a temporary right of nomination or presentation to benefices. But the clergy

\* Dupin's ecc. his. and Ratio disciplinæ Nov' Angl. p. 27.

clergy piously prevailed on the founders to designate this power to them in their last wills. Thus and by mortmains which they devoutly procured in bequests and pious uses, subjected to the direction and disposal of the religious, they had intrigued *two thirds* of the property of southern and western Europe into their holy hands. Thus by the XIVth century the european churches not only lost the liberty of pastoral elections, but with it stupidly played away their property, and subjugated themselves, their souls, bodies, and estates, to a plausibly usurped, because spiritual dominion. Thus the churches at length lost the invaluable power of pastoral election, which they have never been able to recover. This shews how dangerous a thing it is to surrender liberty! In the reformation, the clergy themselves lost that power which they had piously intrigued from the people in the four preceeding centuries. For upon secularizing the ecclesiastical revenues, the protestant princes, nobility and oppulent founders, making appropriations for the support of the clergy, deemed it wisdom to assume the presentations into secular hands. And the nomination is now most generally in patronages in all the protestant churches. Thus the power which the clergy in a long struggle caught from the people, is at length lodged not in the people, not in the clergy, but in secular patrons.

The brethren and congregation have *lost their liberty*, when the appointment or nomination of a pastor is rested,  
 1. In the sovereignty, whether it reside in a prince or a state. Thus the states of *Holland*, and the kings of *Sardinia* and *Sweden* have the exclusive nomination to pastoral vacancies. 2. When it is in a presbytery, consistory or confociation. This was originally the case with the *Lutheran* and *reformed* churches in general, and continues so with respect to some of the churches of *Scotland*. 3. When it is shared between the sovereignty and consistory of the clergy, as in the dutchy of *Wurtemberg*. In this dutchy are 450,000 inhabitants and 620 ministers, inclusive of the dignified



dignified clergy. " According to the old laws of the  
 " *Wurtemberg* dominions, the ecclesiastical employments  
 " were intirely in the disposal of the consistory, but many  
 " male-versations having for several years been observed  
 " to obtain under such a power, the best living being be-  
 " stowed on the members of the consistorial council —  
 " the duke thought fit to curtail this privilege of the  
 " consistory, so that now his highness alone appoints the  
 " superintendants, prelates and abbots; for the inferior  
 " parsonages, the consistory recommends three persons, of  
 " whom the privy council nominates one.\*" 4. When  
 it is in patronages, whether the patrons be princes, nobi-  
 lity, bishops and dignified clergy, pious benefactors, or  
 provincial governors. One or other of these have the  
 advowson of by far the greater part of episcopal livings  
 in the british empire, and throughout the protestant world.  
 The royal *conge de lree* so restricts the election of the  
 british bishops, as that their appointment may be said to  
 be in the crown. The episcopal livings in the province  
 of *Maryland* are in the gift of the proprietary governor,  
 who has the appointment and induction of all the clergy  
 of the province. I am told that the collation to all epis-  
 copal benefices in the plantations, excepting the missions,  
 is in the King's governors. In *Denmark* the power ex-  
 clusive is in the prince, nobility and other patrons. Pa-  
 tronages are also numerous in the church of Scotland. All  
 these are total deprivations of choice in the people: in  
 some instances they may perhaps be consulted, but have  
 no *determining voice*, and in point of power this is to have  
 just nothing.

The powers of the brethren, on the case before us,  
 are *abridged and embarrassed*, and their liberty but partial.  
 I. When in virtue of a public compact established  
 among a body of churches, the churches of the vici-  
 nity have a negative on a pastoral choice of a desti-  
 true

tute congregation. Or 2. When in virtue of such agreement the ministers of the vicinity are invested with such a negative. So that there being two voices in the election—the vacant congregation have one, and the neighboring pastors another. I do not know that this is the case in any part of the world. No one can dispute but that an ecclesiastical community or combination of churches can form such a resolve and enforce it, tho' not in virtue of any divine power: yet the wisdom of such a measure may be questioned. 3. When the advowson or choice is in a vestry and church wardens, or committee chosen by the congregation—as in rectories. This is a low species of liberty, and a restriction that almost amounts to deprivation. But in truth the lowest species of real genuine liberty is, when there is at least a negative in the congregation, as well as in a patron or presbytery, or those who share part of the liberty. If there is a negative only in the latter, even the indulgence of choice in the church is no real true liberty. Again, 4. When among a body of *free* apostolic churches, a number of neighbouring churches take upon themselves to be displeased with the acts and election of a sister church, and excommunicate or refuse christian fellowship with that church—if this should not in the event controule the election & introduce a negative on the church, yet it certainly has a tendency to it; and at least shews, that that combination of churches are desirous of spiritual dominion, and would if they had power introduce themselves to such a negative. All pretexts are foreign; the question is solely upon the point of *power*—whether it is solely in the church? or whether it shall be shared with the churches of the vicinity? And such a practice is defensible only upon this principle, that it is best for the whole body of churches to have this mutual reciprocal controul upon one another. And this principal is a fundamental subversion of congregationalism. For if the transferring the whole power of electing a pastor to the churches



churches of the vicinity, would be a total deprivation of power in the particular church; then the transferring half that power, would be a partial a semi-deprivation. And if upon such a surrendery, in a vicinity of 20 consociated churches, the consent of 10 besides the vacant church be necessary, that church retains but one tenth of her power, and has given up and lost nine tenths. Thus the introducing the consociation to a negative on pastoral elections, is an *abridgment and embarrassment*, nearly amounting to a total deprivation of power in particular churches and congregations: and is consequently a fundamental subversion of congregationalism, according to which every congregation is vested not with partial but plenary decisive power.

Churches can then alone be said to be *perfectly free*, when each congregation has an *unlimited, absolute and self-determining* power in the choice of their officers:—such as british freemen enjoy and exercise uncontrollably in the choice of a representative or member of assembly. When no pat on, no association, no consociation nor neighbouring churches have any negative or controul on the pastoral choice; when the election originates and ends with the church and congregation, acting as a sovereignty in this as well as all other ecclesiastical matters. And when a body of churches, 500 for instance, subsist in harmony and benevolence without infringing this fundamental principle of *universal liberty*, that body may be said to enjoy the most free constitution, the genuine apostolic police. It is further to be remarked, that the christian congregations have sense & ability enough to chuse their own pastors, especially since the revival of learning among the laity and the vernacular translations of the scriptures have rendered common christians good judges of pastoral qualifications; besides that in *many* of our congregations are gentlemen of liberal education and learned acquisitions, equal and even superior to the generality of our clergy.

And the present pious and learned body of ministers in this land, perhaps as well adapted to inculcate piety and virtue, and diffuse the knowledge of the great scheme of divine revelation, as any body of pastors in the protestant world, do honor to congregational elections: for it is questionable whether any body of protestants, especially the common people for whom the clergy are of principal use, are so generally and thoroughly acquainted with their bibles, both the doctrinal and historical parts of scripture: they are faithfully and thoroughly instructed.

I shall close this head with mentioning some of those singular churches among the happy few in the christian world, who have not had this inestimable privilege deforced from them, or if once deforced have yet resumed and retained it in opposition to even the pious attempts on the public liberty. Baron *Polnitz* speaking of the republic of *Venice*, whose churches are of the romish communion, says "the inhabitants of every parish, choose their pastors."\* *Dr. Burnet* says of the *Grisons*, "in every league they have a synod, and—the people choose their ministers:" and that "the synod was bound to receive" them.† The three leagues consist of 63 communities, the protestants are two thirds, the catholics one. And another author says of them, "as to the ecclesiastical government, every protestant church has right of establishing its pastors, and of deposing them too."§ Add to these the remonstrants and other sectaries in *Holland* not of the establishment; our brethren the *Dissenters* in *England*, and the *baptist* and *congregational* churches in *America*.

14. We agree that every individual church has the *sole power of judging and determining its own controversies*. Our churches to the purposes of discipline are so many distinct, ecclesiastical, sovereignties, in point of power and controul, as independent of one another, as the united provinces

\* Lett. 25.

† Travels Lett. 2.

§ Syst. Geog.



provinces of Holland to purposes of civil government. So the thirteen provinces on this continent subsist independent of one another as to jurisdiction and controul over one another—yet in harmony. And one church or congregation has no more power over another, than one province over another, and yet they may all subsist in union and love. Union and harmony don't necessarily imply cessions of power, or subjecting to mutual jurisdiction. And as the powers, liberties and jurisdiction of each province may be saved harmless in a general alliance or plan of confederacy, as in the united provinces or swiss cantons; so the powers, liberties and jurisdictions of each congregational church may be saved harmless in a general union and confederacy of churches. And the same principles may take place in confederating a multitude of lesser bodies, as in confederating larger bodies, such as provinces, cantons, kingdoms. But to return,

Our churches acknowledge no jurisdiction of sister churches over them; but hold themselves both capable, and to have power to determine all matters of difference that arise in a particular church. For in truth, in religion we ought all to be free; and consequently not the religious speculative opinions of a christian, one that honestly believes revelation, ought to be deemed the subject of ecclesiastical animadversion in a church, and little else besides his morals. And this every church is a complete judge of, and perhaps is seldom mistaken. And if we go beyond this, neither single churches, nor a body, nor œcumenical councils can determine: as is evident from an experiment thro' the long tract of time from the council of *Nice* to that of *Trent*. It must be confessed indeed, that our churches have sometimes taken on them the decision of matters, which all the power and wisdom on earth cannot determine till the second coming of Christ. But whatever is within the capacity of mortals to determine, respecting the christian discipline, the brethren are sufficient judges of.

Or

Or if they may sometimes be at a loss, they have recourse to the opinion and advice of such council as they think fit to consult, reserving to themselves a liberty to receive or refuse such advice when given. And with this assistance they can determine any thing and every thing that can be determined by mortals—whether they confine themselves to what properly belongs to them; or whether they enlarge into things which God perhaps has not determined for us, and never intended mortals should determine for one another. And with regard to these last, the church, with the assistance of council, can resolve and decide just as wisely as the wisest body of men, and save to themselves the power of deciding the lesser and yet more momentous differences which are truly the subjects of their decision. Therefore though our churches, in forming their decisions in matters of discipline, make application to a council of the pastors and messengers of neighbouring churches; yet the congregational churches universally hold a negative on the result of that council—or rather the decision of such council is of no force till received and ratified by the inviting church: nor does it render that church obnoxious to the vicinity, if she recedes from the opinion of the council. So that congregational councils are *advisory* only. And in this manner have subserved valuable purposes, not so much by affording any new light, as by becoming peace-makers in their connexions, influence and persuasions. Thus our churches are absolutely free with respect to all foreign jurisdiction.

There was indeed in the year 1705, an attempt or proposal to subordinate the whole body of our churches to the jurisdiction of consociation, with final appeal to a general provincial consociation, in which all controversies were to take an ultimate issue and decision. But these proposals met with insuperable opposition, from the spirit of liberty. Dr. Cotton Mather speaking of them says, “there were some very considerable persons among the *ministers*, as well



as brethren, who tho't the liberties of particular churches to be in danger of being too much limited and infringed in them. And in deference to these good men, the proposals were never prosecuted." \* To these proposals of erecting spiritual judicatories, the reverend and learned Mr. JOHN WISE of Ipswich made a very spirited reply, in a satyr entitled "the churches quarrel espoused," in which he shews that the vesting of consociations with judiciary and decisive powers, would in the issue be the abolition of congregationalism. And there is no reason to think this gentleman was an enemy to our churches.—It was early seen to be important, that our churches should be consociated; but whether for the purposes of *harmony* only, or *dominion*, was as early the question. For it was seen that whatever power was ceded to the standing council, just so much was taken away from particular churches; and this clashed with the principle, that every church had power to decide its own controversies. The contesting this claim, and opposing the transferring of spiritual dominion from the church to a standing council, is the true reason, as I apprehend, that all our congregational churches in Massachusetts and New-Hampshire, are not resolved into consociations; which tho' not *jura divina*, are however excellent things. But to shew that the congregational churches are under no foreign jurisdiction of other churches assembled in standing or occasional councils, we may recur to the answer given by our churches assembled in Synod, A. D. 1662, to the question on the expediency and manner of consociations, proposed by the assembly of Massachusetts—This Synod agreed that every church or particular congregation has † "full power and authority ecclesiastical within itself, regularly to administer all the ordinances of Christ, and is not under any other ecclesiastical jurisdiction whatsoever." Subordinate to this fundamental principle is all to be interpreted in that answer relative the communion and consociation of churches.

\* Ratio disciplina. p. 184.

† Result of 3d Synod. p. 82.

churches. Thus we see our churches are hitherto free. And the use they make of councils, which they occasionally invite, is *advisory only*— “when they have done all, the churches are at liberty to judge how far their advice is to be followed.”\* Thus strictly speaking, congregational councils have no power at all: and upon this principle it is conceded that “ecclesiastical councils, undoubtedly, have at least as large rights, and as extensive authority, in churches that are united in confociation, *as in those that are not.*” And this I take to be the truth of the case, that the confederacy was not meant to vest the *confociated* councils with any new powers, or indeed with any power at all, but leave them as *congregational* councils *advisory only*. As to what authority any councils have *jure divino*, or by *divine right*, I shall not enlarge upon in this age of liberty and light. Doubtless whatever power the councils have from this quarter, whether *confociated*, *congregational* or *æcumenical*, is to have irresistible dominion over all the churches.

15. Altho’ our “churches be distinct, and therefore “may not be confounded one with another, and equal and “therefore have not dominion one over another,”† yet they hold a christian fellowship and communion. Our pastors exchange labors with one another, and on occasion administer both sacraments in one another’s congregations. Our churches admit to occasional communion the members of other churches here; and also those who have been sober “communicants in *Scotland, Holland*, or any reforming “churches in *England or Ireland*, or elsewhere. §” The most of our ministers are resolved into friendly *associations*, in which they assemble twice a year for fellowship and harmony, but not for tyranny and dominion. The pastoral interviews at the annual *convention at Boston*, and on the *public commencements* in our colleges, may subserve the purposes of union and benevolence. Provincial conventi-

ons

\* Ratio discipl. 173. † Platform c. 15. § Ratio. disc. 136.



ons are excellent things, so long as they continue only *social interviews* : but when they assume upon themselves the lordly superintendence of the churches, as they did in the IVth & Vth centuries, they degenerate into a spiritual dominion, unfriendly to *liberty and truth*.

“ As communion among kingdoms and commonwealths  
“ hindereth not the intireness of jurisdiction in each king-  
“ dom and common-wealth, within itself, in its proper  
“ concernments; so it is in the communion of churches.  
“ Therefore church communion must be only in a way of  
“ *brotherly association*—but not in way of subordination  
“ or subjection of one church to the ecclesiastical govern-  
“ ment, whether of another church, or of the elders of  
“ other churches assembled in classes or synods.”—Com-  
“ munion of churches in the—way of subordination or  
“ subjection to other churches or synods—the scripture  
“ no where approveth. Not of one church to another,  
“ for there is a parity among churches;—nor of one  
“ church to a synod made up of the elders of sundry  
“ neighbour churches.” \*

The *equality and independence* of every congregational apostolic church, is in part the essential basis of the general union and confederacy. The constitution of our churches, like those in the apostolic age, are *independent, free and social* : and our platforms were received by the body of the churches *only* as plans of union and mutual fellowship;—explicit agreements, in which, reserving to themselves individually their *independence, equality and unaccountableness* to one another, they united in general communion in ordinances, pastoral labors, advice and council :— But quite on a different footing from the constitutions of the churches of Scotland or Holland, for both of which however they always have deservedly entertained a very high esteem. The jurisdictions of the *presbyteries* in the one, of the *classes* in the other, and of the provincial *synods* in both,

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\* *Davenport's power of congregational churches in answer to Paget, p. 149.*

both, even the compilers of our platforms had for some reasons of experience a disaffection to, and our churches much more. They were willing and desirous to walk together as equal sister churches, not in subordination and subjection, but in universal protestant liberty and communion.

Having thus exhibited a summary view of the doctrine and polity on which our churches have a very general agreement, I proceed

II. To mention some things on which there is among us some real or supposed difference of opinion, and to shew that these differences need not obstruct the general harmony recommended in the text : and that these real and suppositious differences may be lessened by benevolent and honorable concessions.

I. One source of different sentiment, were the unhappy excesses into which our churches have been transported in the late enthusiasm that prevailed since the year 1740. In the public mistaken zeal, religion was made to consist in extravagancies and indecencies, which were not according to the faith once delivered. Multitudes were seriously, soberly and solemnly out of their wits. The scriptures were in danger of being neglected for the indistinguishable impulses of the spirit of God ; sober reason gave way to enthusiasm ; the terrors of eternal damnation, instead of subserving rational and sober convictions, were improved to throw people into that confusion, frenzy and distraction, which unfitted them for the genial illuminations of the holy spirit. Besides this, the standing ministry were aspersed, and represented under abusive suspicions of being unconverted, legalists, arminians. And as they were thus publicly and indecently vilified, so it was taught as a duty to forsake their ministrations, and form into separate assemblies. And as was natural to expect, our churches were hereby rent and torn and thrown into convulsions and confusions, to the great dishonor of the general cause. Much

of



of this indeed was piously meant, and honestly intended, and proceeded from a zeal for the cause of God. Thus there was no doubt an intermixture of good, and it is to be hoped many were savingly converted. Our churches have now in some measure cooled and recovered themselves, tho' the spirit of enthusiasm is not altogether extinguished as yet, but operates and influences under different pretexts, and in a different form. But it is to be remarked with gratitude to the over-ruling disposer of events, that amidst the religious convulsions which threatened the subversion of congregationalism, an augmentation of above 150 new churches has taken place in that period, founded not on the separations, but natural increase into new towns and parishes. These differences into which good and pious men were involved, have indeed made so deep an impression, as not to be easily effaced in the present generation, notwithstanding it is so much our interest to unite in love and harmony; nor can we so easily, heartily and sincerely unite as if nothing of this nature had happened to disturb the common benevolence. But it is to be hoped that the spirit of alienation will more and more subside, and not be transmitted to succeeding generations. On all sides there have doubtless been errors and indiscretions, let us put on condescension and charity; and nobly forgive one another.

2. Another source of differences is that of *calvinism* and *arminianism*. Many great and pious men are alarmed at a supposed prevalence of arminian principles through the churches of New-England: and others suppose calvinism greatly erroneous. Under these banners they respectively enlist, combat, conquer, and are conquered. The pretext of these names serves to legitimate mutual aspersions which neither party deserve. To me it appears that these jealousies are founded almost intirely on mistake: nor am I aware of any very essential or general alteration of the public sentiment on what we all agree to be the fundamental principles of revelation. From some considerable ac-

quaintance with the ministers of New-England, I cannot perceive any very essential real difference in their opinions respecting the fundamental principles of religion. I may be mistaken—but their different manner and phraseology in explaining the same principles appears to me to be their chief difference. We are apt indeed to attribute to one another consequences of our peculiar explanations which we by no means adopt. Thus those who are called arminians say of those called calvinists, that their doctrine of *original sin* makes God the author of moral evil—of *election* implies, that we are to sit still and do nothing towards our salvation—of *justification* by the imputation of Christ's righteousness, that it precludes the necessity of *faith, regeneration, inherent righteousness* and *good works*, and so far resolves this great affair into a matter of strict *justice*, as to preclude the rich free grace and sovereign mercy of the father—of *irresistible grace* as destructive of and inconsistent with the moral liberty and free agency of man.—And so on for the rest of the controverted points. And yet none that I ever conversed with who are called calvinists, by any means admit these consequences from their principles. Again, those reputed calvinists say of those reputed arminians, that their doctrine of *moral freedom* implies a natural power to become good and do all that heaven requires of man without the supernatural influence and power of the divine spirit imparted to the soul—that their interpretations of *original sin* implies a denial of the universal depravity of human nature, universal impotency and debilitation of the moral powers, and perversion of affection, with loss of the image and communion of God—that with them *election* is founded on foreseen *meritorious* conditions in man—that their idea of Christ's *atonement* is destructive of the true nature of satisfaction and atonement for sin in the propitiation of the obedience and death of Jesus—that they trust to the *works of the law for justification*.—that they substitute our  
and



obedience instead of the obedience of Christ, for the basis and meritorious foundation of justification—in a word, that their notions and sentiments imply that man is not totally depraved, and tho' fallen, yet by Christ recovered to even a better state at present than Adam in innocency was in; and that there is no need of atonement, renovation of nature, or of the spirit's operation. But all reputed arminians I have conversed with strenuously deny these consequences. And I find both reputed calvinists and arminians, especially of the clergy, agree in admitting the depravity of human nature in all its powers and affections—the absolute inability to faith and holiness, without the special influences, assistances and operations of the spirit on the human mind, over and above the elucidated and inspired discoveries of revelation, I do not mean to reveal new truths, but to enable us to an efficacious apprehension and discernment of those already revealed—that to his enlightening energies is to be attributed the principle of *regeneration*—that we are *justified* in the sight of God, not for good works, but alone for the sake of Christ and his atonement: tho' they may differ in defining the nature of atonement, yet all agree in making it the sole foundation of justification—that the benefits of Christ's righteousness are appropriated to believers by *faith*, as the condition of our receiving the atonement.

Some perhaps entertain sentiments *really* different on these important subjects. Their conviction however is not to be laboured by the coercion of civil or ecclesiastical punishment, but by the gentle force of persuasion and truth—not by appeals to the tenets of parties and great men; not by an appeal to the positions of Arminius or Calvin; but by an appeal to the inspired writings. And I am persuaded if all would freely and candidly compare their sentiments to this rule, they would be very soon found not very variant. They would find themselves to agree in the peculiar doctrines of christianity \* "such

“ as the apostacy of human nature, the guilt and condem-  
 “ nation into which all men have fallen ; the person and  
 “ offices of the redeemer ; our pardon and justification  
 “ thro’ his obedience and sacrifice ; the conditions of the  
 “ covenant of grace ; the nature and extent of that holi-  
 “ ness without which no man shall see the Lord ; and  
 “ the necessity of the influences of the holy spirit to form  
 “ us to it.”

On finding this great agreement, sameness and real harmony of sentiment, among gentlemen reputed essentially to differ, I have often wondered whence could arise such different reputations. And without charging it to the account of art and policy to asperse one another’s characters, I have been charitably obliged to conceive this suppositions difference very like to that which arose on the *covenant of works* and the *covenant of grace*, and produced a memorable convulsion in our churches in their infancy about 123 years ago : of which *Dr. Cotton Mather* has given us an account in his *magnalia* ; where may be seen how the great *Mr. Cotton* was aspersed and encompassed with the public jealousy. \* Jealousies were raised between the best of divines and the best of christians. It is remarkable how essentially they tho’t themselves to differ, and thought the difference even damnable too. Mutual ecclesiastical anathemas were denounced, civil discord ensued, till a dishonorable persecution satiated the public spirit, and prepared the churches for the cool retrospect of 50 years, when they found the whole was surmise, supposition and mistake. *Dr. Cotton Mather* freely declares it his opinion, that the ministers of that day all very nearly agreed in sentiment with *Mr. Cotton* at the same time, respecting those very points on which they unhappily tho’t themselves to differ—and that their jealousies all proceeded from mutual concern for the welfare of the churches, which led them to suspect and be alarmed at every thing that had the

\* *Mr. Cotton’s Ans. to Mr. Williams*, p. 50.



the aspect of tendency to their hurt. Posterity may make the same judgment concerning us.

These things are unaccountable in human nature—but have been facts in past ages—may be so in the present. The only way is to examine our sentiments by scripture; then candidly and benevolently inquire how far we are agreed in reality; to walk together by the same amiable rule so far as we have attained to think alike; and to forbear real differences in love, where there appears a sincere love of truth, candor and piety. Remembering we all have the unalienable right of private judgment in religion; and that liberty of thinking and chusing our religion, *liberty of conscience* was the great errand of our pious forefathers into America. And as to real differences, I believe we might amicably adjust them by honorable and benevolent concessions, by studying and comparing the written word which we all agree to be a sufficient rule, instead of human systems on which we all justly differ. In the search after truth it should be our perpetual motto, "*nul-lius addictus jurare in verba magistri.*" For after all, the question ought not to be what is *calvinism*, or what *arminianism*?—what was the opinion of *calvin*, or what the opinion of *arminius*? but what is real christianity? what is the truth as Jesus and his inspired apostles delivered it?

3. There are some differences of opinion among us respecting the nature and authority of ecclesiastical councils, and the powers of particular churches. If I enter somewhat minutely into this subject, it may not only help us to discern the true source of these differences; but, which I principally aim at, may assist us in perceiving more accurately the nature and rationale of our ecclesiastical polity.

In the first settlement of this country our churches were free, independent and unsubordinate to one another. But though it was an agreed point that each church had of itself plenary power in deciding all its controversies, and issuing all

all matters of discipline : yet they also agreed in consulting and advising with the churches of the vicinity, represented and assembled in council on application of the consulting church. The advisory results of which councils had, as they justly ought to have, considerable weight in healing differences. In time it became the opinion of many of the clergy, that it was best for the conservation of the faith and public order, that the advisory influence of councils should be extended into juridical authority. There have been formed two *platforms* for church discipline and polity:—one in 1647, before the notions of increasing or indeed of giving any authority at all to councils began ; the other not till 1708, when they run high. The first was made at a general synod assembled at Cambridge, consisting of the pastors and messengers of several churches. The latter at a synod consisting of the pastors and messengers assembled at *Saybrook*, previously elected and delegated from the four county conventions of the churches of Connecticut. After these platforms were made, they were transmitted to the churches for their approbation. Those of Connecticut, except perhaps 14 or 15 churches, have acceded at length to the Say-brook agreement : in what sense, with respect to the authority of councils, we shall afterwards inquire. The rest of the congregational churches in New-England generally regulate themselves on this point, according to the congregational platform, which is commonly called the congregational platform, or rather on the purely scriptural model. Now the difference of sentiments respecting the authority of councils, is almost intirely founded on some very strong expressions in both platforms, respecting the powers and independency of distinct un subordinate churches ; and other strong expressions, especially in the Say-brook platform, importing the subjugation of our churches to the final jurisdiction and authority of councils. It may facilitate our understanding this matter, as well as the ecclesiastical polity of our churches in general, to consider  
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the sentiments of the compilers of these platforms, the public spirit of liberty at the times of their respective formation, and the sense in which they were received by the small body of churches at first, and lastly the sense in which they are received and adopted by the present large body of churches; most of which have been gathered since these regulations and agreements of our ancestors. But before I proceed, let me just observe that our ecclesiastical polity, at least so far as relates to councils, whatever it is, like the politics and social confederacies of all other protestant churches, takes origin and is founded in *human* wisdom, human agreement and confederacy, having no claim to *divine* authority. It is only a wise measure which the churches accede to for harmony, fellowship and union. Antecedent to which agreement and confederacy the churches were in full life, in full possession of all ecclesiastical power: and if they have imparted or delegated all or part of this power to councils, the councils received just so much as the churches covenanted to impart and no more:—which the succeeding acts of the churches may resume, limit or continue.

In order to enter into the spirit of the *congregational* platform which we are first to consider, it may be observed what is well known, that the first ministers and churches were partly *presbyterian*, partly *congregational*—both *independent*. There seem to have been three opinions among the ministers. Three or four were for having the whole rule transferred and ceded from the fraternity to a standing eldership; the authoritative act and concurrence of the brethren to be taken in no cases but the choice of elders, and in ratifying the sentence of excommunication. But of this opinion the churches could never be persuaded. Most of the ministers were for an eldership elected by the fraternity, with a negative on the church; and so all church acts to procede on the concurrence of the eldership and brethren in a mixt administration. Some few

churches acceded to this : and this is the highest sense in which presbyterianism ever obtained among our churches. Others of the pastors agreed with the almost universal sense of the brethren in the true and proper unmixed idea of a congregational church, viz. that all disciplinary power vested in the fraternity. All agreed in receiving the scriptures as their only rule in religion :—all very much agreed in their interpretation of the doctrinal parts of scripture :—differing in their notions of discipline in little more than this, viz. that *power of the keys*, which the *presbyterians* would have vested in the eldership, the *congregationalists* would have to vest and reside in the body of the fraternity. Both agreed in the independency of each church. Nor were the presbyterians inclined to the mode of the Scottish or Holland classical presbytery. While they were for the exclusive power of elders in admissions to communion and disciplinary acts, that is for the authority of presbytery in a particular church ; they agreed in disclaiming the authority of a presbytery out of the church, that is the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical presbyteries of the vicinity. The congregationalists retained all the power in the hands of the brethren conjunctly. Both agreed that the power of the keys was in the church, whether exercised by the elders alone, or by the whole church. This is a fundamental principle from which the churches never supposed themselves to have departed. On these general principles the plan of union or confederacy was conceived by the synod, A. D. 1646. assembled on the recommendation of the legislature of Massachusetts. The synod thereupon appointed two gentlemen of the Massachusetts, and one of the colony of Plymouth, to draught each of them a model of discipline and polity for the choice of the succeeding session. The compilers were the reverend messieurs *John Cotton* of Boston, *Richard Mather* of Dorchester, and *Ralph Partridge* of Duxbury. Mr. *Mather's* model is said to have been chosen. Mr. Norton



*Norton* revised it, and with such further amendments as the synod thought proper, it was finished. Now the sentiments of these gentlemen are well known to have been presbyterian in the second sense above defined. I imagine they were nearly in the same sentiments; unless perhaps *Mr. Cotton's* notions of the authority and jurisdiction of councils might be lower than the others, as that pious and learned man had sustained an implied or oblique animadversion in the synod of 1637. So far as I can learn, their notions of ecclesiastical polity were thus, that every church should be furnished with a presbytery consisting of a *pastor, teacher* and one or more *ruling elders*, all elected by the church, in whose hands should be the discipline and governing, as well as instruction of the congregation. That in matters of difficulty this presbytery might advise with a council consisting of such a number of the triumvirate elderships in the vicinity or elsewhere, as they should invite to assemble. That the churches properly congregational, and which had no triumvirate, should instead of an eldership appear in council by their pastors and messengers, as they had done in the synods of 1637 and 1646. That the pastors, elders and messengers assemble in council in the capacity of delegates from the churches—and as  *pares* or equals in council:—not that an occasional council or œcumenical synod should consist of two estates, the clergy for one, and the lay-delegates for another; and so have distinct acts, as in the upper and lower houses of convocation. That as an œcumenical council might assemble at the invitation of the legislature; so an occasional council might be assembled on the invitation of the church when a difficulty subsisted, not authoritatively to decide and determine the difficulty, but to advise the church how to decide and determine it. That they should be assembled only on such occasions as the particular church thought proper, and consider such matters only as the church laid before them, & would be advised in.

That the assemblings of provincial synods and of ordinary councils, be neither of them stated, but both *pro re nata* occasional.

It is well known as I have said, that however fond our fathers in the ministry were of the power of presbyteries in churches, and of the advice of councils, they were however very opposite to the powers of councils, classes or synods out of the church. In opposition to this extraneous foreign jurisdiction, many of them wrote largely, particularly the reverend Mr. Cotton: so also the rev. Mr. Davenport in his answer to the rev. Mr. Paget of Holland: so also the rev. Mr. Richard Mather, one of the compilers of the platform wrote against Mr. Herle in 1644, in confutation of Mr. Herle's "four arguments for the government of synods over particular congregations." Hence these gentlemen were intirely against the decisive authority of councils and synods when assembled: or that they should be vested with power to enforce their decrees with a penalty of non-communication to be declared by themselves authoritatively as a council or synod. They would have them *advisory* only, to give their opinion and advise on difficult cases, as readers of divinity in the university, or men learned in the usages and customs of the churches. They were to the churches, if I may borrow an illustration from high example, what the privy council are to the king. On the matters laid before them they draw up their judgment and result, which is remitted to the church, —if the church received it, it had force; not through the authority of the council or of the churches represented in council, but of the church which receives and confirms it, and which has a plenary power of governing itself, and deciding all its controversies. In like manner the result of an œcumenical council or synod being remitted to the churches, by the reception of the voting receiving churches to have authority, and among these to have force over those only that explicitly receive it. Nor was any church to be hereticated for not approving or receiving



receiving the result of a synod or council. On the singular case of censuring a church as a church (whether any thing of this nature be consistent with the fundamental independency and un subordinate equality of churches, or not) it was the opinion of the fathers that a synod as such, much less an ordinary occasional council consisting of a few churches, had no authority, and ought not to be vested with any, to excommunicate that offending sister church. But that the synod or oecumenical council consisting of a representation of the whole body of the churches, recommending non-communication in their result, excommunication should procede on the acts of particular churches, and be performed, not by the synod *jure synodali*, but by the churches themselves to whom the excommunicatory result should be remitted, or by so many as should see cause for the reasons assigned in the result to withdraw communion:—that no church or churches were obliged to vote this result on the penalty of non-communication\*:—that so far as this sentence of non-communication proceeded in the churches, the particular offending church should be and remain excommunicate till it should render submission to the acceptance of each church reversing the sentence:—that if the act of non-communication passed in all the churches, said church was absolutely and intirely excommunicate; if in 20 only, it was excommunicate with respect to those 20 only and no more, and remained in order and regular standing with those churches from which it was not cut off by an express act. Thus in the opinion of these gentlemen, the highest act of ecclesiastical censure, viz. excommunication, was to be guarded.

This I take to be a just summary of the opinion of the fathers on ecclesiastical polity in general, and the constitution of councils in particular—as may be collected from their writings, especially Mr. Cotton's book of the keys, and Mr. Norton's answer in the name of all the New-England pastors, to the questions on church polity sent over by

\* Non tamen sub pena censuræ ecclesiasticæ, Norton ad Apollon. p. 110.

by some of the London ministers from *Appollonius*, a dutch divine, in the name of the *Zeland* pastors in 1644. This answer was wrote the year before the synod, which assembled first in 1646, again 1647, and lastly in October 1648, when they presented the platform to the legislature to be by them recommended to the churches. Mr. Cotton in his elegant preface to Mr. Norton's answer, comparing the ecclesiastical jurisdictions in the Holland and New-England churches, sums up his opinion on this subject thus: *Synodos nos unà vobiscum, cū opus fuerit, & suscipimus & veneramur—actus regiminis quos vos à synodis peragi velletis, eos à synodis porrigi ecclesiis et ab ecclesiis ex synodali diorthosei peragi peteremus.*—*Perimus et illud etiam ut regimen omne ecclesiasticum administratur à presbyteris cujusque ecclesie in ecclesie facie; nec inscia nec invita ecclesia. Vos aliud quiddam vendicatis.*—*Annon satis tuto cautum fuerit nequid ecclesia detrimenti capiat, si omnia a presbyteris ecclesie, ecclesia conscia & consentiente peragantur, modo nihil arduum—nisi ex consilio vicinorum compresbyterorum transigatur?* We may remark that "*ex synodis porrigi ecclesiis, et ab ecclesiis peragi*" gives the intire idea of the power of councils and the power of churches: the councils are to advise what is to be done, the churches are to do what is to be done. Agreeable to this was the opinion of Mr. Hooker, President Chauncy, Mr. Davenport, President Oakes. Mr. Hooker who died 1647, while the platform was composing, speaking of synods says, "they have no power of inflicting censures or of imposing their conclusions and determinations upon others under pain of censure." And again "they set down their determinations—and so return them to the particular churches whence they came, and their determinations take place, not because they concluded so, but because the churches approved of what they have determined."\*

President  
Survey, part. 4. p. 47.



President Oakes was a great advocate for the ballancing power of elders in mixt congregationalism, and for "councils and synods, and the decisive power thereof, as it hath been stated by the leaders of the congregational way both in Old and New-England." Though he had no notion that "the rule and authority of the elders should be rendered an insignificant thing—as in the way of the *Breunists*"; yet he was as careful "that the liberties of the people may not be overlaid and oppressed, as in the *classical* way." "If presbyterianism in the rigor of it should obtain among us, there will be an oppression of the liberties of the people." Comparing the forms of the several protestant churches, he says, "Great blindness had happened unto the world for many ages——&c. The reformation in K. Edward's days was then a blessed work; and the reformation of Geneva and Scotland was a larger step; and for my part I fully believe that the congregational way far exceeds both, and for the substance of it is the very way that was established and practised in the primitive times, according to the institution of Jesus Christ.— And indeed it hath been my persuasion from what I have read and observed, that those that would forsake the congregational, and pass over to the presbyterian way, because of some differences of notion among our congregational divines, or difficulties in the practice and way of the congregational churches, shall find that they make but a bad exchange; and that there are as many or more differences, difficulties and entanglements in the presbyterian principles and practice. And I must needs say, that I should look upon it as a great degeneracy if we should leave the good old way so far as to turn councils and synods into classes, and provincial assemblies.— And elders should manage all themselves in an autocratical absolute way, to the utter subversion or overthrow of the liberty and priviledge of the brethren."\*

\* President OAKES' Election Sermon, A. D. 1673.

The spirit of liberty at this time in the churches was such, that they were on the subject of *disciplinary power* generally congregational, and in no wise fond of the lower restrictions of the elderships: and with respect to *admissions to communion*, they were so universally congregational, that I suppose there had not been an instance of church admission *sine fratrum suffragiis*, without the votes of the brethren. This part of presbyterianism, viz. the elders admitting to communion, without the explicit concurrence of the church, never obtained among the first churches. Several churches in compliance with the sentiments of their pastors, had the *ruling* and *teaching* elders at first, as well as the *pastor*: yet they at length disused the *ruling* elder; and the *teaching* elder as distinct from *pastor* is now dropt. The authority of this triumvirate never rose high; some few of our pious fathers early put in high claims for it, that it should be vested with supreme rule and sole dominion. But the spirit of the churches would not bear this. The generality of the clergy, not merely from condescension, and being overpowered by the prevailing spirit of liberty, but I believe from honest persuasion that it was the scripture model, were for dividing all acts of rule and discipline between the *eldership* and *fraternity*, and rendering the concurrence of both necessary. And here the churches closed, only being at liberty to have, or not to have an eldership besides the pastor. Tho' the churches would not bear an actual negative of the eldership, whether in a single person or more. Nothing of moment was carried from the beginning, without the explicit consent of the fraternity. Nor had they the least notion of surrendering this privilege, much less of suffering sister churches either distinctly or conjunctly to have any jurisdiction over them. So far from this, and so full were they of the ideas of plenary congregational power, that it was held a general principle, that individual churches had not only the uncontrolled power of pastoral *elections*, but of the pastoral



pastoral investiture, *ordination* or appointment; which even the first worthy ministers, as well as churches, held to be the lesser act.

Having taken this survey, we are prepared to judge on the platform itself, the sense in which it was conceived, the amended sense in which it passed the synod of 1648, and the sense in which it was, through the recommendation of the general assembly, received by the churches, and lastly the sense in which, by act of legislature, it in effect became the ecclesiastical provincial establishment of *Massachusetts* and *New-Hampshire* and *Connecticut*. For by acts of legislature in these provinces parochial contracts for the support of the congregational clergy are enforceable at law. And these acts having received the royal sanction constitute congregationalism a *legal* establishment. As to the platform itself, it is evident that it leaves the scriptures to be the sole rule of faith, ordinances and discipline. As to what relates to authority and polity, tho' the compilers hoped to have introduced a triumvirate presbytery in each congregation to the reception of the churches, yet the authority of such presbytery was confined to such churches as received it, all being at liberty to use it or disuse it. That while the discipline and rule should at least in part vest in the eldership of the presbyteriated churches, the whole should vest in the fraternity of the congregational ones. And that no power should be ceded to councils as such. Accordingly the platform leaves each church with plenary unceded power, making the councils and synods advisory only and pro re nata or occasional:—not excepting the extraordinary case of excommunicating a whole church, for this is not to be done by the council, but to obtain only upon the acts of particular churches. In the third way of communion, the judgment of the synod or council for declaring non-communion against an offending church is of no efficacy, but by “ particular churches approving and accepting the judgment

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" of the synod \*," and respectively declaring the sentence of non-communication in each church. Thus at length with a multitude of interspersions securing the independency and uncontrollable power of the churches, it was passed and received as the plan of public confederacy, which united the *presbyterians* and *independents* under the one common title of congregationalists, before agreeing in doctrine, mode of worship, ordinances, and the self-government of churches. This union did not introduce either to a jurisdiction over one another, but left them the full possession of their unceded peculiarities. They agreed that admissions should be by the voice of the brotherhood—differing in this, that the rule and government should be divided between the elders and brethren in the one, and vest wholly in the brotherhood of the other: and that the ceremonies of pastoral investiture might be performed by the elders of the one, and by delegated brethren of the other. The enjoyment of both these peculiarities was covenanted to remain to both respectively, without breach of charity or the union. It was a fundamental principle of the union, that every voluntary assembly of christians had power to form, organize and govern themselves, and in imitation of the apostolic churches to gather and incorporate themselves by a public covenant, and to elect and ordain all their public officers. They held communion with all protestant churches; yet held a peculiar fellowship with the churches of their peculiar way and order: and thence the matters of principal moment, such as the gathering of churches and ordinations of pastors, they transacted in the presence of the delegates of other churches, whom they invited and called in as *witnesses* of their faith and order. The essence of pastoral ordination they held to consist in the election and public covenant between the pastor and the church. The ceremony of pastoral institution they held to be the lesser act, which yet ought to be performed as the gathering of a church with fasting

\* Platform. the



and prayer. The conducting of which religious ceremony was left to the elders in the presbyterian churches—in churches where there was no elder, the platform recommended the calling in and employing of the neighboring pastors to assist in ordination; yet with an explicit concession that even this might be performed “by brethren orderly chosen out of the church for this purpose”. This insertion with others shews the popular sense of liberty in our churches at that time: and the subsequent practice suggests the true idea of ordination councils, as used in these churches.

The sense in which the platform was received may be further collected from the effect with which it has obtained. The popular sense was too strong for the plan conceived by the clergy. The churches were really congregational from the beginning, and never fond of a presbytery for rule and government, nor were they ever pleased with the idea of a mixed congregationalism devised by our wise fore-fathers, in which the power was divided between the elders and the brethren. Nor did the distinction of presbyterian and independent, and differences thereon subsist so much among the churches, as between the churches and the ministers—the ministers were for presbytery, the churches for congregationalism unmixt. It was natural then for them, being left at liberty, to use it. Hence the distinctions have long since been lost in the one common name of congregationalist. The *lay-elder* (if this be not a solecism) is almost intirely dropped\*; and the *teaching elder* as distinct from *pastor* has long since been disused. Truly neither of these ever obtained in many of our churches after the first generation. Two officers of the triumvirate ceasing, the disciplinary authority of consequence vests in the fraternity: unless perhaps in the few churches originally mixt (for I know of none, or not more than one of the first churches purely presbyterian) where the pastor may continue

\* Some few churches have two ruling elders, and some twelve.

continues to retain a negative on the church, or in the language of our ancestors, where the power of rule is in the elder, and the power of privilege only in the brethren. And under the umbrage of those clauses securing this power to the elders of presbyteriated churches, the pastors of some churches purely congregational have claimed and assumed this power. But according to the true principles of congregationalism, the pastor, besides being moderator of church meetings, or president of the christian fraternity, has but the authority of a private brother in the rule and government of the church. The platform happily succeeded in preventing lay-ordinations. And as to councils, they stand just as the platform provided at the invitation and election of the particular church, and in their decisions *advisory* only. This is the polity on which the body of the New England churches now stand, except a few who have formed themselves on the true presbyterian model according to Scotland, consisting chiefly of accessions of the present century, and a number of the Connecticut churches.

Having considered the nature of *congregational councils*, I proceed to shew the origin and nature of *consociated councils*, which obtain in Connecticut. So early as 1662 there were proposals in the synod at Boston drawn up by Mr. Shepard, for resolving the whole body of the churches into consociations, that is, that each district of neighboring churches should by their pastors and messengers assemble annually in a standing council to hear and give judgment on ecclesiastical controversies. But this proposal dropt, not being acceded to by the churches, but strongly opposed by them, as they judged themselves possessed of sufficient power to govern themselves. A few years after this, the ministers of several vicinities had formed themselves into associations or pastoral meetings for prayer on occasion of the indian wars\*: these associations having continued about

\* The ASSOCIATIONS began about A. D. 1670: the first CONSOCIATIONS A. D. 1709.



about 30 years, began to be desirous of assuming the confociated form—which might easily be done if the churches could be prevailed on to delegate some of the brethren to accompany the ministers and sit with them in their pastoral meeting, and withal prevail on the churches to refer their difficulties to this annual or bisannual assembly. Several of the ministers had urged all the specious arguments, but without success. The early anticipated danger of introducing what might finally terminate in foreign jurisdiction, prevented the churches from acceding to the proposals of 1662. In 1700 these proposals were ripened into a formal plan for erecting the *associations* into *confociations* or standing councils with the most absolute power and jurisdiction over the churches; admitting appeals only to a *general confociation* composed of delegates from the several particular confociations, and vested with a definitive binding sentence. This plan began to pass the associations in 1705, as a previous step to its being recommended and adopted by the churches. But the opposition it met with from most of the associations, and the yet unassociated pastors again prevented its being recommended to the churches, where it would have met with still greater opposition through the spirit of liberty. Though it failed in the Massachusetts, yet two years after, it was resumed and carried into execution among the churches of Connecticut, which at this time were, as I take it, universally congregationalists, tho' several of the principal ministers were inclined to the presbyterian rule and government of churches. There were at this time about 40 churches in that colony. On the recommendation of the provincial legislature, which had been previously procured, \* the *pastors* and *messengers* of the churches in the four counties assembled in four separate conventions, and draughted or passed four prepared models of church discipline, as nearly resembling

\* Very much through the influences of the honorable Gurdon Saltonstall, Esq; Governor of the colony, a learned divine, who had been formerly one of the pastors.

sembling that of 1705 as the spirit of the churches and pastors would admit, for several of the principal pastors were truly congregational. These separate conventions delegated each perhaps two or more pastors with their respective messengers, to meet in a general convention, and compose out of the several remitted models a plan of discipline for public establishment. These delegates from the county conventions assembled at *Saybrook* in 1708, to the number of perhaps 10 or 12 pastors, and perhaps twice as many messengers.\* This synod adopted the *Savoy confession* \* with the *heads of agreement*, which happily united the presbyterian and congregational brethren in *England*. Had they stopt here, the liberty of the churches had been secure. They also from the public sense collected as above, composed *articles for the administration of church discipline*. I have been told that the model from New Haven county, said to have been draughted principally by the reverend Mr. *James Pierpoint*, was that which with some amendments passed the synod. The synod having thus combined together the *confession*, *heads of agreement*, and *articles for discipline*, as an ecclesiastical constitution; it was recommended by the general assembly of the colony, and received by most of the churches. A subsequent act of the general assembly has declared such churches as accede to this constitution, to have a *legal establishment* in that colony, not however exclusive of congregationalism, which has equally a legal establishment. Thus there are three forms of religion established in the german empire, In virtue of this agreement and constitution, the acceding churches were resolved into four consociations, which are now increased to nine. These consociations consist of two estates, the *ministers*, and *messengers*, in effect separate in their acts; for though they sit, deliberate and vote together in council, yet their acts are of separate import;

+ There were only four. *abolish Statement* p. 61. for

\* Formed and agreed to by 120 congregational churches in England, assembled by their messengers in the Savoy London 1658.



for being two distinct bodies in point of cognizance & jurisdiction, they are so vested with a negative on each other, that the concurrence of both in a certain new manner is necessary to complete an act of council\*. There at present subsists a difference of sentiment among worthy and pious men, who are real friends to the churches, respecting the *powers of churches*, and the powers of *consecrations*, which shall subordinate when in competition. This difference of sentiment I take to be very little among the churches, nor between the pastors and churches in general, but chiefly among the venerable clergy. The churches as I take it make no question with respect to their own plenary and uncontrollable power. The present difference

\* This platform by implication vests a minister with a negative on his church in all her acts. And in council it has thrown a very great balance of power into the hands of the ministers, even to more than a negative on the messengers. For a majority of the pastors with so many of the messengers as make a majority of the council make a vote: but not a majority of the messengers and so many of the pastors as make a majority of council. On the present footing, the churches have not an equal active representation in council: they may indeed send as many messengers as they please, and this is the only way left them to retrieve the balance of power they lost in 1708. Thus in a council of 20 pastors and 20 churches, if the 20 churches send but one messenger each, then 15 pastors and 6 messengers may make an act contrary to the sense of 14 churches. This agreement then possibly subjects three quarters of the churches to the decision of the pastors and one quarter of the churches. To restore the balance it is necessary to send three messengers at least from each church. On the subject of power we are to consider all the possible chances. Now though the churches have right to send three or more, yet it was easily foreseen that there was no probability of their sending more than two, and generally but one. Now on the whole two questions occur, whether the pastors are vested with this particular degree of power and influence in the rule of the churches by our Lord Jesus Christ? and whether this particular plan of discipline and constitution of councils is prescribed in the scriptures? If not, the whole is a human agreement and confederacy, not at all partaking of the nature of a divine institution: and though it may subserve valuable purposes, is not to be conceived as an ordinance of God.

difference among the pastors might be healed by charity and amicable condescensions, with the retention of their respective judgments as was done the last century upon the differences between the presbyterian and congregational pastors as to church power. The litigation of pastoral controversies unespoused by the churches, especially on the subject of the pastoral powers, excepting those with which they are evidently invested by the great head of the church, is peculiarly unhappy in the present rapid increase of our churches, when it is our true interest for both pastors and churches to be cemented by benevolence and union. The pretext on one side is heresy: but heresy is to be encountered in this age by reasoning and appeals to the sacred oracles, not by the decisions of uninspired councils. If councils were by the explicit voluntary act of the churches vested with ten times more authority than is claimed for them by their warmest advocates, they could never decide the point. The scriptures are the only rule of protestants.

But whatever be the pretexts on either sides, the powers of the consociations being not known in the scriptures, are to be determined by an appeal to the platform that constitutes them. And in order to judge of this we must enter into the sense and design with which it was conceived, and that in which it was adopted by the churches—that we may reconcile those parts of it which interfere with, if they do not contradict, one another. Taken literally, it in the first place stipulates the absolute unsubordinate power of particular churches. It afterwards vests the *consociated council* with authoritative final decision on all matters of discipline submitted to it by the churches of the circuit. It at length vests the council with general and original jurisdiction on “all occasions ecclesiastical.” It should seem also by some expressions, that it is vested with the *power of the keys*, the power of declaring non-*communion* on a particular church. Now the question is, whether



whether this amounts to transferring the power out of the churches into the council, in which they are thus represented? If it does, then there is a contradiction. And the next question is, upon a competition, which shall loose their power, the *particular churches*, or the *consociation*? The *decisive power* when assembled, and the power to assemble uncalled upon "*all occasions ecclesiastical*," if bona fide ceded by the churches, amounts in my opinion to an intire and absolute surrendery of all power and liberty from the churches, and may in time be claimed and demanded. For with such power the consociations may interdict any ecclesiastical process in the churches on any ecclesiastical matter, and with such prohibition remove it out of the hands of a particular church into the council. There remains then but one way in which the liberties of the churches are by this constitution secured, and if this be closed, their power and privilege is a cypher, viz. that the standing council have no power but when called, and on the matters only submitted by the church—even this would be a surrendery of more power than is ceded to *congregational councils*, which are *advisory* only in their results; whereas the *consociated councils* are *decisive* in matters submitted by the churches. Whatever was the sense of the churches in adopting it, it is pretty evident that the platform itself is interlined with a clause vesting the consociation, not only with the decision when called by the inviting church, but with original jurisdiction upon "*all matters ecclesiastical*," unless the phrase "*all occasions ecclesiastical*" be limited to discipline, or interpreted in subordination to the fundamental principle of the union, the uncontrollable power of particular churches.

Let us then consider the sense in which it was received by the churches. And here we are to remark that the platform itself provides and stipulates that "none of our particular churches shall be subordinate to one another, each being endowed with equality of power from Jesus

“ Christ : and that none of the said particular churches, “ their officer or officers shall exercise power or have any “ superiority over any other church or their officers.” This was the basis of the union—securing this they agreed to unite in social confederacy and fellowship. If any subsequent expressions intermixed in the articles of agreement should seem to interfere with and contradict this principle, so as to transfer eventually the power out of the particular church in its individuate capacity—is it to be supposed the churches ratified them ? rather is it not to be supposed that they interpreted them in a sense subordinate to the first principle ?

If the council has jurisdiction on all matters, whether submitted or not ; then the churches in their individual and separate capacities may possibly have none at all, because the council may possibly take cognizance of all. But if the council can take cognizance of one matter without the consent of the church ; then in that one case the church has no power. If it was first agreed that each in their separate and individual capacities should take cognizance and determine all matters within the church : and afterwards it was restricted to their representation in council, would not this subvert the first principle ? Was the thing so apprehended by the churches ? Or can it be contended that the churches power and consociations do not interfere, when the latter without the consent of the former take a matter out of her hands and determine it ? If the church puts it into the consociation, her power is given up—she has no decision of her own, but must submit to the decision of the council, unless she applied to the council for advice only, and not for a judicial decree. This is a great surrendery. But to vest a foreign body with power to come and take a matter regularly depending and issuable in the church, and determine upon it contrary to the sense of the church, is a still greater, even an intire surrendery of all power, or at least submitting to hold



hold it of the confociation. And was this the sense of the churches—of the 30 that first received it—and of the perhaps 100 new ones that have adopted it since? Is not this effectually to subordinate particular churches to one another? and enabling a number of churches and their officers to exercise power and have superiority over another church and her officers? Or was it meant that truly one church should not exercise dominion over another, unless she could gain a number of her side, and then indeed she might? And was it indeed the design of the churches to subordinate a particular church to the body? Would not each embodied church thus derive an accession of power in her united capacity, and thus become vested with an unavoidable superiority? And does not this mutual accession of power destroy the individual equality of churches, and effectually subordinate them to one another as well as to the body? If A B and C equal and un subordinate, vest one another with a controlling power, so that A cannot act without the consent of B or C, and so for all—this is a mutual transferring of power; in which transferred or modeled power A B and C equally partake, and thus become *equal* in power. But does not this equality of accessional and interchangeable power destroy the *first equality*? and is not this peculiarly modelled equality a mutual subordination of the whole? It is most certainly. If so, the first or last must be given up. Liberty may infer equality of power; all equalities of power do not infer liberty. But if A B and C covenant that they will not act without the advice of one another, with reservation of power to act contrary to advice, liberty and equality are saved. If they covenant that when they submit a matter to one another it shall be final, and retain the power of submitting, the *liberty* and *equality* are preserved. It is the last sense only in which the stipulated equality and liberty of the churches can be retained upon the Saybrook platform. *In all other senses, equality may be re-*

*tained, but the liberty is lost.* Equality of power to be obedient and assist in enslaving others, remains when the power of self-government is lost. But it is better to loose our liberty into domestic than foreign hands. There are degrees in vassalage or subjection as well as of liberty. The fathers stipulated for the churches the most *perfect* liberty. It is possible in time there may be one or more provincial confederacies or generalities here, and an audience or common *council of state* for civil administration standing on free provincial elections. Even the *consulate* and *senate* of the roman empire subsisted a long time on elections, and these not septennial or triennial but annual. There would be an essential difference between subordinating the provinces to the resolutions of the supreme council of state, tho' of their own electing; between this I say, and their reserving to themselves a power to ratify or annual those resolutions. Even the first is preferable to foreign appointments, and in a sense may be said to be a valuable liberty and privilege: but true genuine liberty consists only with the last. The united provinces of Holland have found they can subsist in this manner: and after all that has been said, this form of polity is not more liable to convulsions and revolutions than any other. But however it may be in other respects, it is certain that with respect to LIBERTY, the provinces will prefer that plan of confederacy which reserves to them in their separate capacities the approbation or disapprobation of the plans or political measures conceived and remitted to them from the supreme common council. And supposing the fundamental basis of such a union, was the *equality, uncontrollable power* of self government in each province, and that no province or provinces, or their officers, shall have any power over any other province or its officers: And supposing while defining the business of the common council, as how that it is to take cognizance of "*all matters political*" in any or all the provinces, with



with power to assemble on "all occasions political," there should also be intermixed some strong general expressions respecting the power of the council amounting in their literal senses and perhaps in the intended sense of those who inserted them, to an absolute power and irresistible dominion: And after the council was introduced to the reception of the provinces, chiefly thro' the stipulated security of liberty; the council should undertake *de novo* to enforce some of their resolutions by the unnoticed and liquidated clauses of the constitution: I say supposing all this, would not the provinces feel their liberty touched? And would it not be wisdom for them all to unite in opposition, unless the council dropt their claims? Would not this be the event, unless the spirit of liberty was extinguished or embarrassed by management?—If this *council of state* be by constitution vested with the judicial decision of all matters of difficulty submitted to it by any of the provinces of the union, it will nearly resemble the *consociations*. If the *council of state* only deliberate for the public good and remit such deliberations to the provinces, and on application of a province upon difficult emergencies give their definitive sentence, i. e. the result of their opinion and advice, it will nearly resemble the *congregational councils*. If the *council* have absolute power over "all matters political" in all the provinces, and in virtue of this can interdict all lower processes, and remove all causes before it, without the consent of the province, and even contrary to it take a matter out of its hands and judicially determine it, and enforce this judicial decision on the province, on penalty of ejecting it from the union; it will nearly resemble the *consociations* in the sense of some of the worthy pastors.

The churches felt the importance of reserving to themselves the submission of causes to the consociation. They at once perceiv'd, that if the consociation could of their own motion assemble upon a church and authoritatively  
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take out of her hands the judicial decision of causes, their liberty was gone. Accordingly, when April 13, 1709 the churches of New Haven county, by their pastors and messengers first formed themselves into a consociation, in consequence of the Saybrook agreement, they acceded to the agreement upon certain restricting explanations, which shew as well the public spirit of liberty, as the sense in which they adopted the platform. In these explanations it was stipulated that a majority, both of messengers and pastors was necessary to an act—that the sentence of non communion was not definitive, nor to be declared till it had passed the approbation of particular churches—that “churches may call a council before they proceed to “censure, but without their allowance no particular person “shall have a council before excommunication:” Essentially agreeable to that fundamental principle of their union, “that none of our particular churches shall be subordinate to one another, “nor exercise power, or have any superiority over any other church, or their officers.” No subsequent expressions to be taken in a sense subversive of this, because in themselves null and void.

On the whole, it seems to appear that however the power and subordinate equality of churches is secured in the beginning of the platform, yet there are afterwards such insertions, which, if taken literally, would subvert the first indispensable principle. In consequence and under the umbrage of which it is demanded as a right that each consociation, charged with the inspection of its churches, have power to arraign and depose a pastor without, and even contrary to, the consent of his church,—take “all causes ecclesiastical” out of the hands of the church, and judicially decide them—and if the church denies this power and jurisdiction, to arraign the whole church, decisively judge upon her, and enforce their decree with the sentence of non-communion. In this sense it should seem that the constitution has established two powers inconsistent



consistent in exercise, the *uncontrolled power* of particular churches, and the *controlling power* of the consociations. And if the spirit of liberty did not prevent, it may become a rule for the consociations in virtue of the clause, "all occasions ecclesiastical,"\* to issue prohibitions to the churches (which has been tried in one instance) to remove such causes as they the consociation think proper, out of the hands of the churches, by a *certiorari* into the supreme ecclesiastical tribunal. But this was not the sense of the churches, when they received the platform. The principal alteration which they deemed was this, that whereas the congregational councils were elected promiscuously from the churches, the churches were now limited to the consociated council as a standing council on matters of discipline, which they vested with a decisive power on matters which they submitted to them—and which they might on all other matters repair to, advise with and consult as congregational councils. A history of the consociations from the beginning to this time, and the use which the churches have made of the consociations, would abundantly evince this. It is further to be remembered, that they never once thought of any alterations respecting ordination councils, and least of all, that the consociation exclusive should have the power of ordination in the circuit, as appears from the uninterrupted usage of the churches for the first 40 years after the platform, in which I suppose there was not a single instance of *consociated* ordinations. All these claims are of modern date, and defensible only upon those novel interpretations which are subversive of the first grand fundamental principle of the union. The Connecticut churches remain at liberty to chuse what ministers they please, to ordain their pastors elect, and what churches they please

\* The extensive jurisdiction of the High Commission subsisted on a like comprehensive clause, "all affairs ecclesiastical." The force and application of which was felt by the holy and venerable Cotton, Norton, Hooker. See Hume's History of Britain, Vol. i. p. 37.

please for a fraternal witness of the solemnity, and from whom also to ask and receive the *right hand of fellowship*. For the right hand of fellowship may either upon the principles of christianity, or the platform, be as regularly received from the congregational churches, as the confociated ones, even by the confociated churches themselves, as has been repeatedly the fact. The fellowship and communion is indiscriminately held among both. The pastors alone with the consent of the electing church, ordain the pastor elect; and in the name of themselves and the churches, give the right hand of hand of fellowship, to denote their willingness to walk together in pastoral and church communion.

As the platforms are supposed to receive great efficacy from their becoming provincial establishments, it is necessary to consider this also. Antecedent to the platforms, the three colonies of Plymouth, Massachusetts and Connecticut, made and continued to make parishes by acts of their respective assemblies, and vested them with power to tax themselves for the support of such pastors and teachers as they should elect. The same thing was continued after the platforms were adopted by the respective acts of legislature as provincial establishments, and especially after the present charters. Which acts in the provinces of Massachusetts and New-Hampshire, receiving the Royal sanction after the revolution, as fully establish congregationalism in those two provinces, as the acts of parliament and the union establish episcopacy in South Britain, and presbytery in North Britain. And the assembly of Connecticut being vested by royal charter with plenary legislative power, the religious establishment of that colony is compleat, as all her other legislative acts are, without the royal sanction: especially as it is an establishment of the same thing which has received the royal approbation in the neighbouring province, which gives a declared construction of that particular law or act, as not being contrary to the acts of parliament;



ment : especially this is consentaneous to that part of the act of union which establishes a similar religious institution for Scotland. Now all the force which a particular form of religion receives from a civil establishment, whether national or provincial, is from the temporalities and civil immunities annexed by the legislature. With regard to immunities and public secular offices, all religious protestant sects are equally privileged in New-England. But the legal power to tax a society for the maintenance of ministers, and other parochial charges, belongs to but one general denomination, the *congregationalists*, under their somewhat different forms, excepting that the episcopalians in Connecticut, under certain limitations, have power to tax themselves. And legally those churches or assemblies that are independent presbyterians, or Scotch presbyterians, or congregationalists truly such, or lastly congregationalists on the Saybrook model, are congregational only in law. The law considers them, not as churches purely,\* but as as parochial congregations, allowed in their religious form to model themselves as they please, as they judge most agreeable to the scriptures. The legal efficacy of their acts results, not from the religious form, but from the parochial powers with which they are endowed. The parishes are to certain purposes incorporate, bodies known in the law; the efficacy of parochial contracts all issue from the parochial powers; and the contracts with pastors depend not at all for their validity in law, upon any of the forms of ordination, whether performed by elders in a church and pastors out of the church, or whether indeed there be no ordination at all. For I suppose if a parish in their parochial corporate capacity should contract with an unordained preacher at an annual stipend for life, upon con-

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\* The churches, as distinct from the congregation, are bodies corporate to the purpose of receiving and improving benefactions, and holding estates ad pios usus; but not for taxing themselves for the support of the ministry.

dition of his performing divine service every Lord's-day; that it would be equally valid in law as if he was ordained, or equally valid as if made with a school-master for life or during good behavior. And this seems still more evident, not only from the nature of parochial powers, but from hence, that the pastoral contract of legal validity antecedes ordination in all cases. Unless the parochial call and acceptance be deemed only preparatory to the public enfealing and ratification of the contract: yet even here, the transaction which induces legal obligation is only that part of ordination in which the call and acceptance is publicly ratified—and yet as this is a covenant only between the pastor and church, and not explicitly between the pastor and congregation, which is only ecclesiastical, it should seem that that which has legal efficacy on the inhabitants of the parish or congregation as such, is the antecedent contract. But supposing it depends on ordination, and that the legal covenant is not perfected till the solemnities of the investiture: yet by the universal practice of our churches, the ordination may be performed by whomsoever the church desire to do it. And in installments in particular, it is indifferent whether this antecedent ordination has been performed by congregational pastors, or by those who have had ordination according to the church of Scotland. All pastors have the power of ordination, and can confer holy orders on whomsoever they judge qualified, and at the desire of a particular church can give him the pastoral charge of that church—when such pastor is ordained, and such church organized with a pastor to all purposes civil as well as ecclesiastical. And though it is always desirable that there should be a harmony among the churches, and though perhaps it would not be prudent for the church to desire it, or the pastors to perform it upon the sure prospect of disunion, yet when it is done, whether agreeable or disagreeable to sister churches and congregations, the parochial immunities are unhurt, and the procedure



procedure valid both ecclesiastically and legally, so far as the law takes any notice of it. This was early and all along the practice of our churches, and the platforms have induced no alterations in it.

The whole religious establishment of New England is congregationalism, except in the colony of Rhode Island, where the legislative establishment is universal protestant liberty, but without annexing parochial privileges to any sect. Here no religious congregations or societies are bodies known in the law, and all benefactions, regularly ought to be made to *seoffees in trust*. In the three other New England governments, all parochial congregations are bodies corporate. The legislature of Connecticut in particular have enacted, "that the inhabitants of any town or society or parish constituted by this assembly who are present at a town or society meeting legally warned, shall have power by the major vote of those so met to call and settle a minister or ministers among them"—and "that the minister so called and settled shall be the minister of such town or society."—"and all agreements—made by the major part of the inhabitants—with such minister or ministers respecting his or their settlement, &c. shall be binding and obligatory on all the inhabitants of such town or society—and their successors." And again, "all such towns and societies or parishes by their proper votes or acts shall annually—grant a tax for the purpose aforesaid, to be levied on their inhabitants according to their respective lists." From hence it appears, that all which induces legal obligations is to be done by the inhabitants or members of the congregation—the act of the church in pastoral election as distinct from the congregation is not necessary, though I suppose universally practiced, except in one instance. The churches as such are legal bodies for receiving and holding estates, but not for regulating the settlement of pastors. In this the laws universally consider the

parochial inhabitants in a congregational capacity, whether the church in the parish be *congregational, confociated, presbyterian or scriptural*.

If a parish church on the congregational platform should for reasons renounce it for the Saybrook, or lastly should renounce both for the purely scriptural model: the parish is the same parish, amidst all the mutations of its church, enjoying the same civil and legal immunities and powers, and is treated by the legislature as all other parishes of the congregational platform. And however the churches may have confederated among themselves and may be affected by the decisions of council; yet the parish congregation, or the churches considered as part of the parochial congregation are unaffected—if in its ecclesiastic capacity it is affected, in its congregational it is not: its spiritualities may be touched, but not its temporalities. Whenever these shall be connected—the affecting the one will sensibly affect the other. But as the case now stands, if the confociation assume even the decision with which by the platform it is vested (much more, should it happen to assume an unsundered constitutional jurisdiction) and decree contrary to the sense of the *congregation* and the *parish church*; the *first* is not touched—and one vote which they have power to make among themselves withdraws the *latter* from this jurisdiction, without the least detriment to her temporalities or ecclesiastical liberty:—as has been repeatedly done; nay, if even excommunicated by the whole body of churches, yet has she the same legal privileges as all the others. When a church and congregation have become large, they often on differences divide: the minor or withdrawing part form by spontaneous voluntary act into a congregation, and gather a church, and elect a pastor, whom they request some of the neighbouring pastors to ordain and confer holy orders upon. All this is done or may be done, for it has been often done from the beginning, antecedent to the assembly's forming them into



into a parish. Now whenever it has received parish powers, it is in all respects secure as to its temporalities, whether the church be in fellowship with the body of churches or not. A new parish may be erected in the old parochial bounds on the application of aggrieved brethren: but the standing party remain and continue a parish, and even the first parish and church as they hold under the first, and not a subsequent appointment. And in all instances in Connecticut but one, the two parishes formed within the same parochial bounds are of different forms as to their churches. And the act of assembly incorporating a new parish into a body known in the law, does not destroy the first parish, nor affect its antecedent acts and agreements "made by the major vote of the inhabitants." This whether the first parish church be consociated, congregational, or presbyterian; whether this year the one, or by vote of itself the next year another.

This being the state of the religious establishments in New-England, and in Connecticut in particular, it appears that all claims of councils or consociations, with respect to jurisdictions and decisions in opposition to the sense of particular churches and parochial congregations, may be fruitless and to little purpose, besides a temporary embroiling of the churches. Besides, that through some unhappy principles respecting the terms of communion and the qualification of communicants, by which multitudes of sober, pious and virtuous christians are deterred from the ordinances, our churches are often but a small part of the parochial congregations. And it is the congregation in its parochial congregational capacity that the law considers: And this as such does not enough partake of an ecclesiastical nature to be subject to ecclesiastical jurisdictions; or to have the validity of any of its acts dependent on the decisions of an ecclesiastical council. And even as to the influence of these decisions on the churches as such, they perhaps had better be left as those of the congregational councils

councils *advisory* only, according to the sense in which it is probable that the Connecticut churches received their platform. All that is beyond this, till the public spirit be subdued, must endanger contests and oppositions, in which the public benevolence and liberty may suffer. And it is to be remarked, that even consociated churches have often called in congregational councils to advise on difficulties; which shews that they did not understand themselves restricted to the consociated councils. And it is further to be remarked, that the churches of the apostolic age knew nothing of consociated or congregational councils, nor their powers; but subsisted in the full enjoyment of unembarrassed liberty. No apostolic church had authority over another, either in an individual or aggregate capacity. The claims of authority in consociated councils over the churches, are not only contrary to the primitive pattern, but probably will not prevail in New-England, unless the legislatures enact that no congregational churches shall have benefit of the laws. It is said that there are several churches in Connecticut which have not acceded to the platform, most of which are congregational; and yet have the same immunities and privileges with the others. And any may renounce the platform when they please, as has been done in some instances, and yet are in full charity and communion with the consociated churches. It might be happy if they could all walk together on the consociated form, as they probably would do in time, if the consociation subsisted for fellowship only, and not for dominion, which essentially interferes with the stipulated equality of churches. Nor can the consociations regularly, I mean consistently, declare non-communication with one of these congregational churches, unless they do with all— if the cause or crime be only their denial of their jurisdiction, because they well know that all congregational churches agree in denying this jurisdiction. Nor was it originally designed by the Saybrook council, or the Con-

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necticut Assembly, or lastly by the receiving churches, that all or any of the uncomplying congregational churches, should for this be hereticated, or held under the sentence of non-communication. Nor that every church acceding to the union should be obliged to send delegates to the consociation in all causes: as to this, they were at their liberty. And the churches have frequently omitted this, as I am told. Nor can a consociation regularly by the platform declare non-communication *jure synodali*, for this, or a real crime in the church supposed offending, especially in New-Haven county, because the churches of that circuit, at their first forming into a consociation in 1709, expressly covenanted that the sentence of non-communication should be referred back to the particular churches of the circuit, and obtain on their particular acts. Hence half a dozen churches may for present reasons decline sending their elders and messengers to a consociation for such time as they please, and yet continue members of the union, and remain upon the platform, and may afterwards resume their rights, till such time as they voluntarily renounce the union, or are excommunicated by the acts of the particular churches of the circuit. In which last case, and even before if they please, they may meet by their delegates and form a new consociation, and become a true consociation of a new circuit, and regular upon the platform—not subject to the consociation of another circuit—unless in some future progress of alteration in the policy, all the consociation should be subjugated to the controul of a general consociation. In which case the new consociation might subsist a sovereignty of itself, denying the jurisdiction of all foreign powers. New-Haven consociation, when first formed, consisted of but *five* churches.

The essential laws of ecclesiastical fellowship and the Saybrook platform require that, in all excommunications, whether of persons or churches, this measure is not to be gone into without giving opportunity to the persons or churches

churches to be hereticated to make their defence, and shew their reasons to the church or churches of the vicinity, that they may act on their own knowledge and judgment, and not the report of others. If then they sustain excommunication, they revert to the state of congregational churches; out of union indeed with the consociated churches of the circuit, but holding all the privileges of the legal establishment, and remaining in union and fellowship with only the greatest body of churches in New-England, I mean those on the Cambridge platform, if not perhaps with those of the other consociated circuits, that is, they will or may possibly be in unity, with about 400 churches, and out of unity with 100, perhaps not above 50. All this is said upon supposition that the ejected church or churches be the same as to doctrine and manner of worship with the generality of the churches, and that the denial of foreign ecclesiastical jurisdiction be the *only* reason of non-communication. As was the case in the only instance of hereticating a church in New-England.

This is the case as matters now stand. We have seen what efficacy the platforms have received from the legislative regulations about religion. And that in effect they have not entered into any of the distinctions, but consider all only as different species of congregationalism. All that is done is only to incorporate the congregation—the congregations model themselves as they please. No temporalties or immunities are annexed to any unions or combined clusters of churches, or to any public resolutions issuing from such combination. Perhaps it would be well if all our churches were resolved into friendly consociations for mutual aid and fellowship. All unions indeed forming an aggregate of powers, are liable, and too apt to terminate in jurisdictions. Not that these coalitions are absolutely necessary. The apostolic churches subsisted without either—as I have said they knew not either consociations or classes or their powers—and whenever they take



take place they must obtain on other prescriptions than those particularly specified by the apostles, or our common Lord. But though the cantoning a body of churches into generalities and circuits, be not absolutely necessary, and in no wise scriptural, yet it may subserve valuable purposes. Many of these things, not entering into the essence of religion, are left to human discretion. The late reverend Dr. COLMAN was a friend to consociations of churches, but not in a sense subversive of congregationalism, for he looked upon them not the destruction, but the "very soul and life of the congregational scheme"—Now they would prove the death of the congregational scheme if the churches be subordinated to their jurisdictions, *for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage* \*, and this even while they promise themselves liberty. Fellowship and benevolence, not dominion, was the great characteristic of this venerable divine, whose praise is in all the churches. He patronized the most congregational act which was ever practised in these churches, in an instance which posterity may see the wisdom of imitating. And he was too well acquainted with antiquity not to be sensible that the grand defection of the latin church took origin in those artfully deformed cessions which subverted the liberty, independence and plenary power of churches. So long as the power continued in the hands of the churches, undelegated to representation by perpetual decree or binding constitution, they were safe as the apostles planted and left them:—but this ceded and given up, they passed into an intestine oppression, more barbarous than the pagan persecutions.

The churches are at present above 500, and increasing again. They might form 20 consociations besides those of Connecticut. And if formed without jurisdiction, they would nobly subserve the purpose of cementing us together into a respectable body. But the moment jurisdiction

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enters,

\* 2 Pet. ii. 19.

enters, like the creating *Cæsar* perpetual Dictator, the beginning of the absolute loss of liberty commences.\* Let the consociations be *advisory* only to the churches, as the privy council to his majesty, the assembly of the states to the *united provinces*; even general provincial consociations of the same import *advisory only*, might have a friendly influence *salvâ Libertate & Jure Ecclesiarum universalium*. An influence which one would think should content the ecclesiastical councils. But even this, let it be remembered, would be but a human device of polity, neither prescribed or suggested by Christ or his apostles; and having nothing of divine in it, not being so much as an ordinance of God, but a voluntary agreement only of men. And consequently the decisions and results of councils ought not to be put off upon the churches as an ordinance of the most high, who is never to be brought in to patronize the fallible decrees of mortals uninspired, which are sometimes delivered to the churches in the name of God, with strong expressions importing that the contempt and disobedience of them is contempt and disobedience of the most high. *Nec Deus interfit nisi dignus vindice nodus*. There needs the utmost caution lest the opinions and canons of councils be conceived in this light. For however

\* The procedure is gradual from artfully deforced surrenderies of power to abridgments first, and afterwards an intire abolition of liberty. The roman and athenian senates were originally formed to deliberate and recommend the best measures of public action. The senate conceived and prepared plans for the public ratification of the people, with whom was the supreme aggregate power. This origination in the senate was called *autoritas*, denoting still for 300 years no proper power. In time the senate shared half the power, the plebeians under different classes the other. At length the intire imperial power was gained into representation; and when this was settled into a perpetual constitution, it was finally in effect subjected to the controll of a perpetual dictatorship in one person; when liberty was lost. Then and even before this *auterity* and *power* became synonymous. So *Results* of councils and *power* may import the same thing after proper stages.



ever in the commencement and infancy of a policy. they are taken but advisory, they may be drawn into prescription and precedent by subsequent generations and ages. Antient customs become deemed to be established constitutional powers and rights; and so the influence and ascendancy of a well constituted council or union of councils degenerate into tyranny. And future priests may, through weakness and ignorance of history and the love of dominion, imagin themselves, as members of an established council, to hold those powers and influence *jure divino*, or by divine right, which a constitution or policy by imperceptible steps and insensible transitions acquires through a tract of time. In faithfulness therefore to posterity and the truth, every present generation should teach their rising offspring the essential difference between what arises from human policy, and the institutes of heaven: and that as the most high has not vested any order of men since the apostolic age, with divine infallible authority, so none of their decisions on or about religion partake in the least degree of infallibility—not even the churches themselves in their particular or aggregate capacity:—that ecclesiastical councils have no authority unless imparted by the churches, and this though ecclesiastical yet not divine:—and that if ever this be ceded or given up to the degree of controlling particular churches in a perpetual constitution, posterity will again date the death of liberty from that unhappy æra—till future vigorous struggles and united combined exertions of the public spirit shall resume it into those hands where God and nature placed it. The exigencies of the christian church can never be such as to legitimate, much less render it wise, to erect any body of men into a standing judicatory over the churches. If on some extraordinary occasions it may be necessary to cede up the united power into an extraordinary commission; yet when the public work designed is accomplished, let the commission end, the power revert

and rest in the bosom of the churches. Never suffer the united force and power of the churches to be at the call, especially at the command of a standing body of men, even if part subsist on constitutional delegates from the churches. The ends of civil and ecclesiastical polity are so widely different, that however this may be expedient in the one, it is by no means so in the other. If the united force of the churches can be constitutionally collected and directed to such objects and ends as a standing council (liable to corruption and undue influence) shall command, without and contrary to the consent of individual churches, whether the policy be a monarchy, or an oligarchy, it is indifferent—liberty is gone, tyranny and intestine oppression may be the fate of succeeding generations. Our churches have not as yet given up their powers and liberty into foreign hands, at least the main body have not, and it is questionable whether any have designedly and bona fide done it. Let them be taught to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made them free. Heaven is giving us an opportunity to plant a noble body of free churches in America, and has charged us with a part to act for posterity. The *love of dominion* which reigns in every breast, and thus becomes a general principle, is almost too mighty for that other general principle the *love of liberty*, which it is designed to balance. Take either away out of human nature, and confusion arises. There is no need of cultivating the former, it is inextinguishable: but there is great need of cultivating the latter, especially in religion. Liberty and dominion are in opposite balances on the scale of human nature—both necessary: the latter is dangerous unless well guarded; the former generally safe excepting when collecting for one public burst on tyranny. They are designed by God to counterpoise and balance one another. There is no danger but the wanton licentiousness of the one will be corrected by the artifice and force of the other. Neither



ther let liberty be extinguished nor dominion; both have their proper spheres; when the one degenerates into tyranny and unnecessary restraints, and when the other becomes anarchy, they are both equally pernicious to society. The principles of both and their balance ought to be well understood, settled and defined, and the *finis quos ultra citraque nequit* be fixed on the public sense, and their rationale publicly taught and explained thro' the community.

The body of the clergy in New-England might easily adopt a system of ecclesiastical management, which in a century or two, with moderation and attention to the public spirit, would gently gain the submission of the churches, and insensibly steal away their liberty. But I rejoice to believe they are not inclined to it. Yet let me say that measures may be honestly, and with pious intent, gone into, which effect this as surely as if with the design and foresight of a *Machiavel*, a *Richlieu*, or a *Mazarine*. The system adopted designedly or undesignedly, however looks with undeviating operation to the same end. Any thing of this nature may be wisely opposed. Let us remain true and firm to our first principles, the unsundered power of the churches. And indeed there is need of the exercise of but little power here; for christianity is not a system of human power and dominion, but of liberty and benevolence.

To sum up the whole, it appears from above, 1. That our churches were originally free and independent of one another. 2. That any plan of confederacy is just what it was agreed, explicitly received and understood to be by the confederating churches. 3. That such confederacy, whatever be its form, is not *jure divino*, but intirely human and prudential: and was never designed to interfere with the independence and prerogative powers of particular churches. 4. Least of all was it designed to regulate articles of faith, it being one of the fundamental and explicit declarations

declarations of the churches, and even of the platforms, that the SCRIPTURES alone are the ONLY RULE OF FAITH. \* And 5. That such are the circumstances of our churches, so intermixt with sects of various communion, that it is impolitic to use extreme and coercive measures—since the universal liberty permits the oppressed to form into voluntary coalitions for religious worship. 6. That strong union being one main thing during the infancy of the churches, uniformity in lesser matters is not to be rigorously exacted; but healing and uniting measures being a first point in view, many other things are to be subordinated to this. 7. That the spirit of disunion is attended with more fatal prejudices in the swift growth of a body of churches, than when they are arrived to maturity. To which we may add, 8. That many considerable errors, if let alone, will correct themselves in time on free inquiry, deliberate and unheated disquisitions.

But if different usages and customs in ecclesiastical polity are finally settled in different churches, agreeing in the essentials of christian doctrine and worship: this need not disturb the general harmony. Men build their houses differently, cultivate their lands differently, pursue the same employments in different methods, and in different methods study the sciences—yet if they attain the end, it matters little as to the different means. An empire consists of a multitude of cities, burroughs, towns and provinces, differently constituted by accident, according to the course of events, or according to the different geniuses of the people consociated. And yet in these different ways arrive at individual and public felicity. The plan that happily cements and unites all in one general confederacy and public union, reserving each part its power, liberty and proportionate influence in the mighty whole, is the wisest and

\* “The founders of our churches always professed to make the sacred  
 “Scriptures the only rule in matters of discipline and worship, as  
 “well as in articles of faith.” Hobart's Address. p. 36.



and best. Coercive uniformity is neither necessary in politics nor religion\*. All the kingdoms of the earth are differently policed, and yet all in their several ways subserve the public design of the supreme king. Churches have subsisted well under all the limitations of liberty—all have their constitutional diseases. All protestant churches have different models under the general profession, and yet we have charity for all. We are in full charity with churches which have lost all their liberty, yet are ornaments to the christian profession. And among ourselves, let it not break our communion if any of our churches give up all their liberty, or retain it all in their own hands. If the great end is answered of making men virtuous and good, let us rejoice, though the means are diversified. Particularly let us of the congregational communion in New-England, under the different forms of our churches, cultivate a venerable regard for one another; rejoice that we are so well agreed in purity of doctrine and worship, and walk together by the same rule, *so far as we are agreed*: and for the rest, let us endeavour to hope and think and speak the best of one another, in all our differences, putting on forbearance, charity and a condescending benevolence.

III. I come now at length to consider the expediency of harmony and union, especially among the congregational churches in New-England. And,

1. The first argument may be taken from the importance of the cause in itself considered, its purity, its friendly aspect on the public religious liberty, and its utility to the state. I am persuaded from a very thorough disquisition and search, that there is no body of churches in the protestant world more nearly recovered to the simplicity and purity of the apostolic age. We need indeed some further purifications and amendments; which will doubtless take place

\* "I have no opinion of an exacted uniformity in religious administrations."  
Dr. COLMAN.

place in process of time on free inquiry and universal liberty, to the prevailing of which it is already impossible to put a stop. But in general our churches appear to me to be nearly on the same footing with the primitive churches, as left by the apostles, who doubtless left them completely instituted. Most other protestant churches are under embarrassments from which we are free. If there be more liberty for free inquiry at present in some of them, it does not flow from the nature of their policy, but from the laudable moderation of their clergy, or other less honorable motives— And besides, the avenues to this liberty are embarrassed with dishonorable compliances and submissions. Any embarrassments in our churches procede not from the nature of their policy, but from the spirit of the times, which must and will alter. If there be any true way of worshipping the deity, the supreme Lord of nature, it may be in our manner : even deists must confess that our way is or may be natural and rational. And being possessed of the precious jewel of religious liberty, a jewel of inestimable worth, let us prize it highly, and esteem it too dear to be parted with on any terms; lest we be again entangled with that yoke of bondage \* which our fathers could not, would not, and God grant we may never submit to bear. The lesser differences among ourselves, which will at times unavoidably spring up in this imperfect militant state, and afford a temporary disturbance to the best constituted churches, will again subside, and finally terminate in defining the limits of power, and in more accurately ascertaining the terms of communion and universal benevolence. Providence has planted the british America with a variety of sects, which will unavoidably become a mutual balance upon one another. Their temporary collisions, like the action of acids and alcalies after a short ebullition, will subside in harmony and union, not by the destruction of either, but in the friendly cohabitation



bitation of all. An antecedent fermentation may take place, as it has done in the philosophic world, but generous inquiry and liberal disquisition will issue all in this. Resplendent and all-prevailing TRUTH will terminate the whole in universal harmony. All surreptitious efforts and attempts on the public liberty will unavoidably excite the public vigilance of the sects, till the terms of general communion be defined and honorably adjusted. The notion of erecting the polity of either sect into universal dominion to the destruction of the rest, is but an airy vision—may serve to inflame a temporary enthusiasm—but can never succeed—all the present sects will subsist & increase into distinct respectable bodies, continuing their distinctions for a long time yet to come in full life and vigor. Indeed mutual oppression will more and more subside from their mutual balance of one another. Union may subsist on these distinctions, coalescence only on the sameness of public sentiment, which can again be effected in the christian world only by the gentle, but almighty power of truth. It has been effected in past ages, but can never be effected again on the former measures—so great an alteration is made among mankind by science and letters. The sects cannot destroy one another: all attempts this way will be fruitless—they may affect a temporary disturbance, but cannot produce a dissolution—each one subserves the mutual security of all. The advantages taken by any one sect over the security and indolence, or intestine broils of another, will soon eno<sup>r</sup> awaken its sensibility or moderation, and excite the spirit of self-defence—and so for the whole. Such is human nature, especially enlightened with the pure light of revelation and sciences. Nothing however will content us but actual experiment—this experiment will be made in one century, and then perhaps we shall be satisfied. But to return from this digression.

In order to perceive what particular sect is most friendly to the public liberty, we need only take a survey of the

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religious

religious establishments in the several british provinces on this continent. That civil establishment is friendly to liberty, which either vests all sects with equal immunities, or secures each sect from being obliged directly or indirectly to contribute to the public support of others besides themselves. Where all sects are equally established there is properly no *toleration*, all partaking in the benefit of the establishment. Where one sect is invested with power to enforce taxes on themselves for the support of their clergy, and all others exempted from such tax, there is a true and proper toleration, but perfectly easy: as such dissenters are exempted from ministerial taxes. Where the established clergy are supported by a branch of provincial revenues appropriated, and dissenters are not exempted from contributing, and yet share no part of such appropriation, such dissenters are tolerated in the lowest sense, viz. on condition of their payment to the established clergy. And it may so happen that the same sects may be established, or dissenters in different provinces. So a scots presbyterian is a dissenter in England, and an episcopalian a dissenter in Scotland. Let us now take a view of the provincial establishments. In *Nova Scotia* it is episcopacy, tho' the public believe it to be equal protestant liberty. In *New-Hampshire*, *Massachusetts* and *Connecticut*, made under the influence of congregationalists, it is *congregationalism*—but all other sects are exempted from taxes for the support of the congregational clergy. The ministerial taxes of this sect are enforceable at law—this is the principal advantage they enjoy above the dissenters in those provinces. In *Rhode-Island* it is universal equal protestant liberty, no sect being enabled to enforce their ministerial contracts at law. In *New-York* episcopacy is established for the four first counties, where all dissenters, ministers and people are obliged to pay to the established clergy, except so far as the Dutch churches in virtue of an original stipulation gained an exemption and establishment. For the other



other counties of that province it is universal liberty. The religious establishment of the *Jerseys* and *Pensylvania* is universal liberty as in *Rhode-Island*. In *Maryland* and *Virginia* it is *episcopacy*, with appropriations of large revenues from tobacco for the established clergy only. And tho' a very considerable part of those two provinces, according to Dr. Douglass and others, are presbyterian and other dissenters, who contribute proportionably to this ecclesiastical revenue, yet they are not allowed to share the least part of its appropriation. As to the three southern provinces, their climate not suiting european constitutions, they will not figure as to numbers for perhaps yet a century or more, untill the present race is hardened and get the better of a noxious region. Episcopacy however is in effect their establishment, or perhaps will be in time: But with this only difference at present, that the episcopalians in South Carolina have gained of the legislature an appropriation of certain duties on leather and skins. Excepting their proportion in this, the other protestant sects are not yet obliged to contribute to the support of the episcopal clergy in those three provinces.

From this view it appears, that in virtue of the religious establishment in the three provinces of *Pensylvania*, the *Jerseys* and *Rhode-Island*, there are no dissenters, but all enjoy the same common immunities; excepting that some few Dutch and perhaps other churches in the *Jerseys* are created bodies corporate by patents obtained from the governors. But the happy policy of establishing one sect without infringing the essential rights of others is peculiar to the three New England provinces, where *congregationalism* is the establishment, \* with respect to two of which it is said to be confirmed by the royal assent. Now tho' our churches and congregations are endowed with parochial immunities, yet all not of our denomination, and particularly the episcopalian, are exempted from parochial taxes to

the established clergy—for what is collected of episcopalians in parochial assessments is paid to the episcopal incumbent—a favor which our numerous brethren the dissenters at home have never gained. Nor is any such favor granted to our brethren the presbyterians in Maryland and Virginia, whose religious establishment was made under episcopal influence.—But where we have power we grant liberty so abundantly, that even in those parts of New England where congregationalism is the legal establishment, other sects scarcely know that they are tolerated dissenters, so happy and mild in our dominion. When by the establishment all the members of a community are by law obliged to contribute to the support of the clergy of one sect, whether in parochial taxes or *appropriated revenues*, all the other sects suffer in their essential liberties. When every sect is free of one another, or proportionably share the public revenues and offices, their essential liberties are intire. Congregationalism being endowed with parochial powers over its own members only, does not in the least interfere with the essential liberties of the other sects. And further it is to be observed, that the peculiar tenets of any religious protestant sect is not made a religious test of holding civil or military offices in Pennsylvania, the Jerseys and New England.

Hence it appears, that congregationalism is friendly, I will not say more so, but as friendly as any other sect to the public liberty civil and religious; and does not in the least interfere with the liberty and essential rights of other sects. And besides, our peculiar forms do not prevent our distinguished loyalty to our sovereign—for we may boldly say his majesty has not a body of more loyal and well affected subjects in his dominions. All the New England sects are loyal; but the principles of loyalty to the illustrious house of Hanover are inculcated on the people by the congregational clergy with peculiar sincerity, faithfulness and constancy.

Again,



Again, our churches are well calculated for the good of a christian state. There are two ends of churches in a state, *instruction in christianity*, and the *public offices of religion*. Both these, and especially the former, are as well performed in New England as in any part of the protestant world. And perhaps the numerous body of our denomination may be justly distinguished for the popular acquaintance with the sacred writings, & knowledge both of the histories and great doctrines of revelation. Our clergy are not expensive, nor are our people burdened with tithes, nor have we intrigued the ecclesiastical appropriation of enormous impoverishing revenues. The landed estate in England is computed at 20 millions per annum: of which 14 millions per annum were dependent on the clergy at the reformation. In the time of *Louis XIV.* the ecclesiastical revenues of France were 26 millions sterling, when at the same time the civil revenue did not exceed 13 millions. The less expensive the clergy, if a people be well instructed and the publick offices of religion faithfully and decently performed, the better for a state, because the richer the people: and it is easier to raise a sum for public exigencies on an opulent people, than on an opulent hierarchy. Besides, ecclesiastical opulence gives the clergy a weight, which is apt to affect the civil administration.

It gives me peculiar pleasure that notwithstanding their many imperfections, our churches afford such an agreeable review with respect to *purity, liberty, and utility*. For the first, we are nearly recovered to the purity of the primitive apostolic churches—for the second, we oppress no other sect—for the last, the popular knowledge of revelation, the decency and solemnity of our public offices of religion witness for us. And our imperfections admit amendment on our present polity. We have reason to bless God, that when the church was intirely corrupted in the papacy, he raised up and spirited the reformation. But to me it appears, that he has reserved the honor of a most purified reformation

reformation for our churches in New-England. It is truly important that this vine, which God hath planted with a mighty hand in this american wilderness, should be cultivated into confirmed maturity. You are very sensible, that there is a formal attempt on the chastity and order of our churches, which is vigilantly to be guarded against, at present, till our churches grow into one cemented, large, pure, defensible body. It is incumbent upon us to watch and guard their infancy with a paternal godlike fidelity. God has entrusted us with a part to act for posterity and the public; let us not supinely desert it, but act it well, consecrate and transmit the purity of religion to generations yet unborn. It is evident nothing tends more to enervate and moulder down our cause, than differences and animosities: nothing tends to strengthen and form it to defensible maturity like union and benevolence. If we have any public benevolence, any bowels of compassion, any tender affection for pure and undefiled religion—by the tender mercies of Jehovah! by the love of Jesus!—let us bury and lay aside our trifling differences, and harmoniously unite in carrying on and perfecting the one same great and noble work.

2. The second argument for union may be taken from the present state of our churches. There is no body of christians on earth in such a rapid increase, and in so flourishing a state, as the congregationalists of New-England. The present state of our denomination as to numbers, for the year 1760, is nearly this—in Massachusetts are above 300 congregational churches—in Connecticut 170—in New-Hampshire 43—which, with those in this colony, form a body of about 530 churches. In 1650 there were about 36 churches already founded, several of which were small beginnings, requiring many years to fill up. In 1696 were but 130 congregational churches in all New-England. And being A. D. 1760 increased to 530, the proportion of doubling is once in 30 years. A. D. 1643 there had arrived



arrived in 298 transports, about 4200 planters with their families, making about 21,200 people for all New-England \*. Since that time more have gone from us to Europe, than have arrived from thence hither. The present inhabitants therefore of New-England, are justly to be estimated a natural increase by the blessing of heaven on the first 21,000 that arrived by the year 1643.

In new settled countries the transplanted colonies, by an established law of nature, in a good climate, do increase to a certain *patrial* maturity, when they begin to decline. At the beginning of this increase the period of doubling is very short, and the augmentation rapid—afterward the period of doubling is extended till it gradually ceases, and is succeeded with a diminution, slow at first, but rapid at last. The period of *patrial maturity*, as well as of *patrial doubling* doubtless in some measure corresponds to the nature of the climate:—the former in our climate may have been about 1000 or 1200 years; the latter 20 or 25 years. The period of rapid *patrial doubling* in 25 years may reach its akme in one third of the term requisite to the final Akme of increase. The ratio of *patrial doubling* continues equable for 3 or 400 years, when in consequence of another law of nature, this ratio begins at once to be greatly extended. Posterity alone can more accurately ascertain these things. If we look into history we may perhaps be inclined to judge the period of *patrial maturity* about 800 or 1000 years, perhaps more than less. It is probable that the colonies transplanted from Shinar into Egypt—and from Egypt afterwards into Greece, came to the maturity of their politest ages about this period. The same observation may hold of the Tyrian colonies at Carthage. Rather more certainly we know that the fugitives from Troy peopled Italy at this period. The few trojan exiles, who were transported in seven small ships, arrived into Italy, according to Livy about 430 years before

fore the foundation of Rome. And it is probable the Romans had their akme of natural increase before U. C. 650, that is, within about 1100 years after their first plantation in Italy. But most certainly of all, we know that the 70 souls, which sprang from JACOB's loins, when transplanted into Egypt grew and multiplied in about 215 years to 603,550 sensible men of 20 years and upwards, exclusive of the levites: which, considering the young men under 20 years, may imply above 3 million souls, an increase on 70 souls only in 215 years. It is true, this public census was made above a year after the exodus, but we are given to understand that there was no increase in the wilderness. This is an unparallelled increase! the period of doubling being about 14 years.

Joseph was 17 years old when he was sold into Egypt. He was 30 at his advancement: 8 years after this Jacob came into Egypt with his family; after which Joseph lived 72 years and died at the age of 110. Israel came out of Egypt 143 years after Joseph's death and 215 after Jacob's coming into Egypt. Moses was born 63 or 64 years after Joseph's death, spent 40 years at Pharaoh's court and 40 years in exile in Midian; and at his return must have found Israel increased in 40 years from about 400,000 to about 3 millions. Upon the view of the hosts of Israel after his return from exile "thy fathers" "went down into Egypt with three score and ten persons;" "and now the Lord thy God hath made thee as the stars" "of heaven for multitude." All the souls that came out of Jacob's loins, exclusive of his son's wives, were 70 at his arrival and settlement in Egypt. If the period of doubling continued equable during the whole term of 215 years, the numbers of increase may be thus exhibited,

Souls



|                          |           |                                  |
|--------------------------|-----------|----------------------------------|
| Souls descended of Jacob | — 70      | — at his settling in Egypt       |
|                          | 140       | — 14 years — period of doubling. |
|                          | 280       | — 28                             |
|                          | 560       | — 42 — 17. y. Jacob's Death.     |
|                          | 1,120     | — 56                             |
|                          | 2,240     | — 70                             |
|                          | 4,480     | — 84 — 72. Joseph's Death.       |
|                          | 8,960     | — 98                             |
|                          | 17,920    | — 112                            |
|                          | 35,840    | — 126                            |
|                          | 71,680    | — 140 — 135. Moses born.         |
|                          | 143,360   | — 154                            |
|                          | 286,720   | — 168                            |
|                          | 573,440   | — 182 — 175. Moses exiled in Mi- |
|                          | 1,146,880 | — 196 (dian.                     |
|                          | 2,293,760 | — 210                            |
|                          | 4,587,520 | — 222 — 215. Exodus at about 3   |
|                          |           | (Million.                        |

If we assume the period of doubling 14 years and 4 months, the 15th revolution would terminate at 215 years; but the number of souls at the 15th doubling would be too small for 600,000 sensible men. So that 14 years is more probably the mean term. I say the mean term or period; for I suppose the periods of doubling themselves varied, being longer at first and shorter at last.\* And if we consider that the sensible men were not reckoned from 16 æt. and upwards, but from 20 æt. the total at the Exodus must be above three million of souls; which will shorten

\* The rapidity and greatness of the Hebrew increase in 215 years renders not altogether incredible what is related of the "Isle of Pines" in an account published in London, A. D. 1668. which, like many accidental discoveries, from incredulity and contempt, passed into neglect and oblivion. In this account it was said "that certain English persons—in the days of Q. Elizabeth making a voyage to the East-India, were cast away and wrecked upon the island near the coast of Terra Australis Incognita, and all drowned, excepting one man and four women, whereof one was a negro. And now lately, A. D. 1667, a Dutch ship driven by foul weather there by chance, have found their posterity (speaking good english) to amount to ten or twelve thousand persons, as they suppose." Q. Elizabeth was crowned A. D. 1558, whence the period of this increase

shorten the mean period of doubling to 13 years. Had this rapid increase continued 40 years longer, 20 millions of souls might have entered Canaan. Infinite wisdom however saw fit to take occasion from the sins of the wilderness, to put a stop to it, perhaps at the time they had arrived at the akme of rapid doubling: so that but about the number of the Exodus entered on the possession of the promised land—three million of people perishing in the wilderness. A flagrant instance this of the public chastisement of the Most High!—which, with the fatal effects of the subsequent dissensions among the chosen people of God, ought to influence us to public virtue and union.

Israel not increasing in the wilderness for 40 years, about the same number entered Canaan that went out of Egypt. About 430 years after the entrance into Canaan, Joab by order of David numbered the people. And tho' the amount of the census which he returned and reported to David was but 1,300,000 sensible men, 800,000 for Israel and 500,000 for Judah: yet the true amount was for the former 1,100,000, for the latter 470,000. But even in this account the tribes of Benjamin and Levi were

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crease could be but, 109 years by A. D. 1667, and probably not so much. This implies their period of doubling 13 years, which we have seen is possible in the Hebrew posterity. One man and four women may be equal to four families for the basis of increase. The Arabian females are

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| Families—4—Years | said to have children at 8 Æt. The ratio of increase which will augment them, from the beginning of Queen Elizabeth's reign to A. D. 1667, to 2000 families, will augment them by A. D. 1760, to above 500,000 families, or two millions and an half of souls, the posterity of five persons in two hundred years. But half, nay one quarter of this number, would be a great discovery. There are many reasons to believe there is a southern continent. |
| 16—13            |   |
| 32—26            |   |
| 64—39            |   |
| 128—52           |   |
| 256—65           |   |
| 512—78           |   |
| 1024—91          |   |
| 2048—104         |   |

2000 Families imply 10,000 Souls.



not included. The total of Joab's census of fencible men of 20 æt. and upwards being 1,570,000, \* implies 7,850,000 souls exclusive of Benjamin and Levi. Tho' the memorable barbarity of the Benjamites cost them the loss of 25,100 men, and almost the extinction of the tribe; yet we find that in about 60 years after David they had recovered and increased to 280,000 fighting men, implying 1,400,000 souls for that tribe; which if not reckoned by Joab may augment the above numbers to 9,250,000 souls. The males of the tribe of Levi were 22,000 at the exodus, and so the whole tribe about 40,000 (the males of 30 æt. were 38,000 in David's time)—which if augmented with the common national increase, and added to the preceding numbers, may give 9 millions and an half for the total of souls of the Hebrews about the times of David and Solomon. And perhaps they never exceeded this. Though their numbers might continue much the same till beyond Jehosaphat's times, and especially during Solomon's reign when the nation was at its summit of glory, both for numbers, riches, policy and union; yet it is probable they had reached the akme or height of patrial increase even before David. Hence we see that they doubled not twice after the exodus; and that the period of doubling was extended from 14 to 2 or 300 years. The seven nations of Palæstine were said to be "greater and mightier" than Israel on their arrival thither. They

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\* In the year 1583, Queen Elizabeth caused to be made a review of all the men in England capable of bearing arms, when they were found to amount to 1,172,000 men according to Raleigh. See Hume's Hist. of Brit. Vol. I. p. 119. According to Dr. Brackenbridge, it should seem that the total of inhabitants in England for the middle of the present century, does not exceed FIVE MILLIONS AND AN HALF, and those of Scotland and Ireland TWO MILLIONS AND AN HALF. So the total of inhabitants in the island of Great Britain and Ireland amount to EIGHT MILLIONS. He estimates the total of France at FOURTEEN MILLIONS. Accurate searches shew that former general estimates have been greatly too large.

were so numerous and powerful as to subjugate Israel 40 years, so long after their entrance into Canaan as the times of Sampson. But tho' the Philistines might be 3 million at first, yet by exile and conquest they were so diminished, that when "Solomon numbered all the strangers that were" in the land of Israel—they were found 153,600" only: which however implies three quarters of a million of souls even in his time. Yet these with the children of Israel to the total amount of 10 million of souls were subsisted in affluence upon a territory, according to Dr. *Pococke*, not larger than the three governments of *Massachusetts*, *Connecticut* and *Rhode-Island*.

In more things than one, that of exile, our New England churches may resemble God's antient chosen people. I apprehend God has great things in design for this vine which his irresistible arm has planted: and that he purposes to make of us a great people and a pure and glorious church. To be sure he has already wonderfully blessed the emigration of our fore-fathers into this wilderness, and caused it to multiply abundantly. The Spanish and French emigrations into America, for a well known reason, do not much increase upon the first settlers, perhaps diminish:—the estimated total of the Spaniards in South America, according to *Don Ullaö*, not exceeding some of the british provinces. The Dutch in *Batavia* have, it is said, from small beginnings increased to two millions:—unhappy for them and their happily reformed churches, if heaven should take occasion from their late public perfidy to blast their posterity, and set them forth a public example in conjunction with antient Israel for our admonition. Happy for us if the admonitions of providence in antient and modern example, should secure our attachment and publick obedience to Jehovah

New England has advanced 120 years in rapid increase, the term of doubling being 20, or according to Dr.

FRANKLIN



FRANKLIN 25 years. \* As this is much slower than the increase of Israel, the period of rapid increase, as distinguished from the ultimate period of patrilial increase, may be longer in the proportion of 14 to 25, or a ratio formed of these numbers. If Israel reached the first in 215 years, we may reach it in 384; of which, as I said, 120 are already elapsed. Above 160 years of rapid increase yet

\* This is verified by reference to the census for the colony of Rhode-Island, by the King's order in 1730 and 1755.

|                                       |   |        |        |                       |
|---------------------------------------|---|--------|--------|-----------------------|
| Census for 1730                       | - | -      | 15,302 | Whites.               |
| Ditto for 1755                        | - | 35 939 |        |                       |
| Deduct for 5 Towns annexed since 1730 | } | 4,910  | 31,029 | Ditto.                |
|                                       |   | 31,029 | 15,727 | Increase in 25 Years. |

According to the reverend and ingenious Mr Callender (Hist. Discourse p. 9) "there were fewer than 200 families in the whole colony, about the year 1658.

The increase of the maritime towns is not equal to that of the inland ones. Tho' the period of doubling for the whole colony is 25 years, now that the maritime towns make so great a proportion of the inhabitants, yet the period is different for different parts of the colony. While on the sea coast it is above 25 years, yet within land it is 20 and 15. The five towns of Gloucester, Situate, Coventry, West-Greenwich and Exeter were 5033 A. D. 1748, and 6986, A. D. 1755, which implies a period of doubling 15 years only. And the two inland counties of Providence and Kent, double on a mean in 20 years. And this I believe is the full period for the inland towns of New England in general; which might be ascertained by calculations on their census in 1730 and 1755. The Ratio of increase for different parts of this colony thus appears

|                                 | A. D. 1730. | A. D. 1755. | Per. doubling. |
|---------------------------------|-------------|-------------|----------------|
| Island of Rhode Island,         | 4486        | 7372        | 35 years       |
| Portsmouth alone,               | 643         | 1172        | 28 years       |
| C <sup>o</sup> . King's-County, | 4460        | 9250        | 22 years       |
| C <sup>o</sup> . Kent.          | 2177        | 5090        | 20 years       |
| C <sup>o</sup> . Providence,    | 3843        | 9820        | 18 years       |
|                                 | 10,480      | 24,160      | 20 years       |

Hence the mean period of doubling is 20 years for that part of the Colony, which lies on the west side of the Narragansett-Bay.

yet remain, by which time thro' the blessing of heaven we may become many Millions. After this we may continue to increase in extended periods of doubling for 7 or 800 years, till we shall have reached the Summit of the patrial increase in 11 or 1200 years from the first settlement of America: which, as it may have then advanced us into the millennial times, preceding examples of the rise and decline of empire may not be further applicable. And here I cannot but remark that the maxim holds good of communities as of individuals "*quo semel est imbuta recens servabit odorem—testa diu*"—that they receive their turn, their genius, their manners, their political constitution, very much from their infant education, the discipline and maxims infused in the infancy of the state: which ought therefore to be carefully attended to. This is especially true of public bodies of Mankind that grow up fast and in such quick successions, as not easily to permit the ingrafting of capitally new customs. The Greeks, Carthaginians and Romans retained the manners of Egypt, Tyre and Troy: and Israel retained the religion and polity which they received in Egypt and the wilderness. But to return.

In order to form an idea of the future growth of New England, it will be necessary to take a retrospect on the past. For the first 15 years from A D 1628 to 1643—"the number of ships that transported passengers in this space of time is computed at 298—" Men, women and children passing over this wide ocean as near as at present can be gathered, is also supposed to be 21,200 or thereabouts."\* From thence to the beginning of the present century, there came not so many from Europe as returned. Indeed at the restoration, on the ejection of 2000 ministers at the memorable black Bartholomew A. D. 1662, some few families with 14 ministers repaired hither; not enough  
however

\* Wonder-working Providence of Sion's Savior in N. E. p. 31. London Edit. A. D. 1658.



however to balance the returns from hence. It was computed in the year 1670 that of 94 ministers which came over, 31 were then living, 36 had died in the country, and 27 returned to Europe. And in this term went back many others, besides ministers. The principal foreign augmentation since was by a body of protestants from the north of Ireland about A D 1730 and onwards. This might be an accession of so few Families. \* It is to be remembered that part of the first planters settled on Long Island, and that considerable numbers since 1731 have removed out of New England to the confines of New York: a number of families also removed into New Jersey about A D 1695. So that on the whole the amount of the public census A D 1755, taken by order from the lords commissioners for trade and plantations, may be estimated not to exceed the natural increase of the original planters in the reign of Charles the first.

Dr. Cotton Mather says, that A D 1696, in all New England were 100,000 Souls. It is said there were A D 1691 about 16,000 militia which may imply 100,000; according to the implication of a like account by governor *Shute*, who A D 1722 reported to the board of trade, that in the province of the Massachusetts were 94,000 people, whereof 15,000 were in the training list. The alarm list, containing the fencible men, may be estimated at a third more. A. D. 1708, Mr. Thomas Brattle estimated for all New-England 100 or 120,000 souls, and 20 or 25,000 fighting men. In 1735 the provincial valuation for Massachusetts was 35,427 polls, whites of 16 æt. and upwards. In 1742 the valuation of whites was 41,000 polls. The same year the rateable polls of the province of New-Hampshire were 6000. In the census of 1755, the colony of Connecticut amounted to 133,000 souls,

\* Dr. FRANKLIN says, "in fact there has not gone from Britain to our colonies these 20 years past so settle there, so many as 10 families a year."

souls, whites. In the census of 1730, the census of the colony of Rhode-Island and Providence plantations amounted to 15,302 whites. The census within the same limits in 1755 amounted to 31,029; and for the whole colony, inclusive of the annexed towns, 35,939 souls whites, the militia being about a seventh part. Not having the census of 1755 for Massachusetts and New-Hampshire, I can only estimate them. I have been told that Massachusetts then amounted to between 234 and 240,000. The provincial numbers A. D. 1755 may have been nearly thus;

|                     |                |
|---------------------|----------------|
| Massachusetts       | 234,000        |
| Connecticut         | 133,000        |
| Rhode-Island        | 35,939         |
| New-Hampshire       | 34,000         |
|                     | <hr/>          |
|                     | 436,939 Souls. |
| Increase in 5 Years | 64,970         |
|                     | <hr/>          |

Total of Souls in New-England 501,909 A. D. 1760. The omission in the census of 1755 of those at sea and others, and the increase on those omissions will more than balance the extraordinary loss of the war the last five years. \* We shall not be mistaken then if we assume the number of inhabitants at half a million in the year 1760. We now commence an increase of 14,000 a year, which in 25 years will be augmented to 28,000 a year: and if providence continues our increase for 50 years, we shall have arrived to an annual increase of about 56,000.

It will be more difficult to estimate the proportion of the sects. Let it suffice that I estimate all but the congregationalists to their full amount. There may be about 70 souls of Jews in all New-England, and as many *Moravians*. From

\* At the end of the campaign 1760, it was computed that about 21,000 had perished in the war on this continent, from General Braddock's defeat in 1755 to 1760 inclusive. Of which perhaps 7000 were New England provincials.



From the most accurate account that I can collect the *episcopalians* do not exceed 2100 families, or 12,600 souls, in all New-England. There are 27 millions, inclusive of two itinerancies: the 27 missionaries, with three other ministers, officiate in 47 churches and places of divine service. Six or seven of these congregations are large; and 30 that are not equal to half of a common presbyterian congregation a-piece: and several that do not exceed 15 and 20 families each. Not exceeding in the whole 30 common presbyterian congregations, which I estimate at 80 and 100 families, and yet at a mean they contain 140 families each. Though we have some under 50 and 60, yet we have many above 200 to 250, and some above 300. From several estimates procured from the *friends*, I take their denomination to be about 16,000 souls in the four governments: though I am assured by a very ingenious and observant friend that this estimate is too large. From like estimates procured of the baptists I take their denomination to be about 22,000 souls in the four governments. These estimates cannot be supposed perfectly accurate, but I believe they are nearly the truth. Besides these are to be reckoned about 10,000 reducible to no class. The total amount of 60,000 subtracted from half a million, the present total of inhabitants in New England, leaves 440,000 souls for the denomination of *congregationalists*,

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*gregationalists,*

\* Of 175 whites in the town of Newport that died A. D. 1760, 41 were Infants of the year, and inclusive of these 51 under 2 years old. The total of whites in town A. D. 1755, was 5519, which might be increased to about 6000 at present. The maritime do not increase so fast as the inland towns. The total of deaths A. D. 1760, if proportionate through New-England, was about 14 500, added to 13 500 the increase of the year, gives 28,000 the number of children born in New England in the year 1760: of which about 3000 died within the year, and 25 000 survived. But I am inclined to believe the proportion of deaths to be less in the country, though probably there were 25,000 children at least born in the year. *Nineveh* contained 120,000 Infants.

*gregationalists.* This being nearly the true state of the sects as to numbers for the year 1760, let us see what may be their respective increase in a century from this time, supposing them to double once in 25 years only.

|     | Episcopalians. | Friends. | Baptists. | Congregationalists. | A. D.  |
|-----|----------------|----------|-----------|---------------------|--------|
|     | 12,600         | 16,000   | 22,000    | 440,000             | — 1760 |
| 200 | 23,200         | 32,000   | 44,000    | 880,000             | — 1785 |
| 400 | 46,400         | 64,000   | 88,000    | 1,760,000           | — 1810 |
| 600 | 92,800         | 128,000  | 176,000   | 3,520,000           | — 1835 |
| 800 | 185,600        | 256,000  | 352,000   | 7 MILLIONS          | — 1860 |

Hence it appears that without considering the augmentation of future accessions from Europe, each of the four principal sects in New England may greatly increase into large and respectable bodies, even with the most sanguine allowances for proseliting. The natural increase on the present stock will in half a century give 46,400 for the episcopalians, 64,000 for the friends, 88,000 for the baptists, and one million and three quarters for the congregationalists. And in a century 185,600 for the first, 256,000 for the second, 352,000 for the third, and seven millions for the last. I shall not enter into the variations which may arise on these numbers in this period from proseliting and shifting communions, though we have sufficient data to form pretty certain anticipations on this head.

The difficulty of breaking the ancestral religion, unless the public enthusiasm be excited, appears not only from the small impression made on the sects here, where the amount of changes may not perhaps exceed 5000 among all the sects: but also from the small impressions made on the sects in Germany and other parts of the protestant world with regard to their general forms—and particularly on the Irish catholics, when the result of the labors of a much longer period is said not to have gained 200,000 protestants, excepting the north of Ireland Scots presbyterians,



byterians. The authors of the system of geography say, "it is computed that about 8 parts in 10 are papists, and that the dissenters are double the members of the establishment." It is to be hoped that the next capital change will be to a still greater purity both in doctrine and worship. Our final dependence for the security and protection of truth is in the irresistible dominion of Jesus Christ, who will eventually subdue all things to himself.

At present the congregationalists have about 515 churches already gathered, which double in less than 30 years.\* So that 60 years hence we may consist of 2000 churches; a remarkable increase, which some of the present generation may live to see. The aged ministers now living, have in their day seen 130 churches increase to 530. In a century from this time we may have 5000 churches, even with allowances for emigrations to new provinces. But in order to this the love of liberty, and a zeal for pure and undefiled religion must be diffused and propagated with unremitted fidelity and vigilance. Should our intestine dissensions unhinge the minds of the rising generations, and disengage or render them indifferent to the cause, it might be attended with unhappy consequences. Union and diffusive harmony are truly important, during this infancy of the churches, and this period of rapid increase. The error of Balaam in the snare he laid for Israel, effectually wrought a confusion, from which omnipotence alone could recover them. Let us not be caught by any similar error. If we adhere to our principles, even the undefiled, the uncorrupted principles of revelation, with the utmost charity and benevolence to others, and without encroaching upon, or interfering with, the peculiarities of our protestant brethren of the other sects, if we are and continue united in faith and fellowship—providence is advancing us in a swift progress to figure and defensible maturity. The present increasing state

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of

\* According to Dr. Douglass the Number of our Churches A. D. 1759, was 407. Summary Hist. V. I. 542.

of our churches, and the dependence of their future glory on harmonious union in their increasing infancy, appear to me a very powerful recommendation to walk together by the same rules, in love and harmony, so far as we have attained, and attentively to *mind the same thing*; that is, ourselves to respect, and to teach our children to mind the same great interest of the same common cause—never to desert it, but faithfully pursue it: that the public spirit be animated, guided and governed by the *same* public principles which are our common interest. It ought particularly to be inculcated upon our friends going from us to the settlement of new towns or provinces, to carry religion with them, to *settle early in church order, and furnish themselves with a ministry of the word and ordinances, for the benefit of themselves and their children.* Great encouragement should be given to our colleges and nurseries of literature, which grow more and more important every day. We should often relate to our posterity the history of the wonderful providences of God in the settlement of this country; and remark the growth of our churches, and engage them by all the honorable motives of christianity to steadfastness in the faith once delivered to the saints, and in the liberty wherewith the gospel has made us free. Let our children be often taught to read the sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth verses of the twenty-sixth chapter of Deuteronomy with parallel application to the history of our ancestors. Let the great errand into America never be forgotten.\* Let them be made well acquainted among other

\*The plantation of Plymouth colony consisted of 300 souls A. D. 1629; when the principal draught of our fathers from the mother country commenced the settlement of the Massachusetts. And in the 10 following years there were 21 churches gathered. About 16 churches planted by the time of the first synod 1637, at which were present 25 ministers. I have observed that there were arrived by A. D. 1643 about 2000 planters, besides 200 gentlemen of fortune, merchants and ministers: which have been judged to imply 21,200 souls. The first Plymouth settlement, A. D. 1620, consisted of 41 planters and but 101 souls, of which there were only  
18 wives



other parts of sacred history, with the history of the Hebrew nation ; in which they will see examples of public reward

18 wives : and I suppose in all the future accessions, there was a large proportion of adventurers single men without families. The Ld. Treasurer's order, April 16, 1629. was for 60 adult females, 26 children and 300 men. A. D. 1644 the militia of the Massachusetts consisted of 26 bands, or perhaps 2600 soldiers, which if but a seventh part, imply but about 16 000 souls : but probably the militia bore a greater proportion, if the males exceeded the females. The restoration of the ballance of the sexes might require that the first 15 or 20 years increase, should consist chiefly of female children. From several computations of this nature I have been inclined to believe, that the first 4000 planters did not imply above 15,000 souls to have arrived by A. D. 1643 ; which were cantoned into 34 churches by A. D. 1645, increased to about 40 churches by A. D. 1650—when they contained 7750 communicants. Perhaps there may now be 60 or 70 thousand communicants. There were 130 churches A. D. 1696, of which 35 in Connecticut : there are A. D. 1760. 530 churches, of which 170 in Connecticut. Hence the period of doubling for the churches is 30 years at farthest. In 115 years we have increased 500 churches upon 34.—This is the Lord's doings, and it is marvellous in our eyes ! Perhaps the multiplication of the primitive churches did not exceed this in the first 130 years from the crucifixion. And it is to be remembered, that of the first planters two churches are not reckoned, which were settled on *Long-Island*. The numbers of the planters might be accurately ascertained by having recourse to the records of the first 30 or 40 towns. I have observed, that as we are above 500 churches at present, so we may by the blessing of heaven become above 1000 in 30, and 2000 in 60 years. The renowned church of Scotland consists of 938 churches—those of the Dutch and Walloon, A. D. 1560, consisted of 2190 churches : to either of which we may be equal in 60 or 70 years.

And while we are anticipating the Growth and Multiplication of our churches in New England—we may with pleasure extend the Prospect to our brethren the presbyterian churches in the other provinces. The wise and happy junction of the two synods of *Philadelphia* and *New-York*, A. D. 1758. formed a coalition of above 100 Pastors with their churches under the rapid augmentation of the like natural increase with ours. In the province of Pennsylvania, inclusive of the three Delaware counties, are 66 congregations, of which 41 are destitute of Pastors. Our brethren are still more numerous in proportion in the province of New-Jersey, and I think also in that of New-York.

reward and public chastisement of providence in a very striking light. From the antient example let our churches be warned, very carefully to avoid the two capital errors which proved the ruin of the Hebrew republic, and which will never fail eventually to subvert the best constituted empire—I mean **CORRUPTION** in **RELIGION** and the public **VIRTUE**; & **DISUNIONS**. These two things operated with full strength among God's antient people, on the revolt of Jeroboam and introduction of idolatry, upon which in a very little time there were not found above 7 or 8000 men out of above a million who had *not bowed the knee to baal*. The pure religion becoming thus corrupted, Israel was ripe for that extirpation, which was effected upon their calling in the foreign aid of Damascus and Assyria. See this in 2 Kings 17. And before this the immediate effect of national dissention was the loss of half

New-York. And there is a very considerable body of them in the frontiers of Maryland and Virginia, where they have already a presbytery formed. Also in New-York and Jersey are two caesus of our protestant brethren the *Dutch reformed*, consisting of 20 ministers: also two churches of French protestants; and 3 congregational churches. All these are peculiarly sister churches, with whom we have an intire harmony and fellowship. Dr. Douglass says, "the three frontier counties in Virginia of *Frederic, Augusta and Lunenburg*, are prodigiously large, and generally settled by north of Ireland Scots presbyterians, as is also *Amelia and Albemarle* counties." Tho' there are many vacant churches, which the colleges are supplying apace, yet the *eight* presbyteries, at the union of the synods in May 1758 consisted of 100 ministers. There have been some transpositions since; but then they were nearly thus:

| Presbyteries. | Ministers. |
|---------------|------------|
| Hanover       | 14         |
| Donnegall     | 11         |
| Lewistown     | 6          |
| New-Castle    | 11         |
| Philadelphia  | 12         |
| New-Brunswick | 11         |
| New-York      | 22         |
| Suffolk       | 13         |
|               | <hr/> 100  |



half a million of men, being near half the kingdom of Israel which fell in one day, the greatest battle that history records. Even Judah forsook the *law of the Lord*; and within five years after the death of Solomon, the corruption he introduced in complaisance to foreign wives, had overspread the empire—to fatal is the ill example of princes. Judah also “*built them high places and images, and groves, on every high hill and under every green tree* :” on which Shishak, with the Egyptian and Ethiopian army, penetrated even to Jerusalem, and carried off the treasures of the temple and the king’s house, the opulence amassed by Solomon. What prosperity attended God’s people when they turned to the Lord and united in his ways? The whole treatment of divine providence towards that people from Moses to this day, has been exactly according to the 28th chapter of Deuteronomy. And excepting in one thing, there may be an analogy between the divine treatment of this and all other states, especially his conduct towards that kingdom wherein dwelleth righteousness. We may then reap great advantage in consulting and duly applying that history, which may be in some measure typical of our own. In a word, we have in the sacred and common histories of providence assistance to become assured in what point of view the PUBLICK VIRTUE and UNDEFILED RELIGION appear to the sovereign mind. If we conform ourselves to these notices and supernatural assurances, we may depend with absolute certainty on the smiles and defence of Jesus our omnipotent patron.

I have observed that our churches, in a distinguished sense from almost all the protestant world, are founded on the bible. Our worthy and venerable ancestors (be their memories dear to posterity) did not like other protestant patrons, form a system of what they thought and judged to be the true sense of revelation, and establish this for the truth :—no—it was eno’ for them that the bible was the inspired rule, and this they made the only rule. And hence,

hence, if on examination we should find any of the received doctrines or usages among the churches dissonant to the sacred oracles,—if we only *judge* so—if this on deliberation be our opinion—we may freely enjoy and profess our judgments, and oppose such doctrines or customs by alledging from the *SCRIPTURES ONLY*; without appealing to *human tests of divine truth*, or encountering the civil & ecclesiastical hostilities with which they have been too generally enforced. And as our churches were thus planted in very great purity, so we see they are in a very flourishing state considering their infancy. The computations with respect to their future growth depend, by the leave of providence, in some measure, on the supposition that we have room to extend our settlements. Agriculture and the rural life are peculiarly friendly to increase. Ten thousand families (not of an old, but even of a new race, which makes a great difference) with means of affluent subsistence, dwelling together in a populous herd, kept from vices but employed in handicraft industry; will by no means equal the increase, which the same number of families would afford if turned forth and dispersed in the wide world and employed in agriculture in a new climate: there is a difference from the employments, but the chief difference is from change of climate, dissipation and the rural air. Farmers find it necessary to change their seed-corn, and shift their herds and flocks. Hillocks of corn planted near together yield not half the increase, as when planted at proper distances on the same ground. The present bounds of New England (the greater part of which is yet a wilderness) permit an increase of seven millions. If providence should complete the reduction of Canada and an honorable peace annex it to the british crown, we may extend our settlements into new provinces, or to the western part of those provinces which by the charters cross the continent to the pacific ocean. With pleasure we anticipate the rapid settlement of new towns and provinces



vinces around us, and filling them up with millions of inhabitants. \* We transport ourselves to the distance of 100 years

\* Table of increase upon half a million inhabitants in the four New England governments for the present period of doubling. By inspecting which may be seen the number of inhabitants in New England for each year.

| A. D.        | A. D.        | A. D.        | A. D.          |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|
| 1760—500,000 | 1767—607,090 | 1774—737,135 | 1781—895,025   |
| 1761—514,050 | 1768—624,170 | 1775—757,857 | 1782—920,185   |
| 1762—528,510 | 1769—641,710 | 1776—779,165 | 1783—946,060   |
| 1763—543,370 | 1770—659,760 | 1777—801,070 | 1784—972,655   |
| 1764—558,650 | 1771—678,305 | 1778—823,590 | 1785—1,000,000 |
| 1765—574,350 | 1772—697,370 | 1779—846,745 | 1810—2,000,000 |
| 1766—590,500 | 1773—716,971 | 1780—870,550 | 1835—4,000,000 |

A draught of 4000 families from the beginning of this period for emigration and the settlement of new provinces, will put off the increase to a million but three years. About 2075 souls removed from hence to Nova Scotia in the year 1760: 4000 families will settle 80 townships with 50 families a piece, which is enough. There may probably remove into New Hampshire and out of New England in 50 years time 8 or 9000 families, eno<sup>t</sup> to settle 160 townships, or about double the number of new townships that have been settled the last 50 years. This involving their increase may afford 60 or 70,000 souls—which number at the end of the period will be rep<sup>l</sup>aced in less than two years increase. The main body of the people may tarry behind, especially as the greatest part of our present possessions are uncultivated. And only the provinces of Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island will admit an increase to 6 or 8 millions. The athenian lacedemonian and other territories of Greece were not much affected with the colonization of Jonia and the asiatic coasts. Though there was an extended inland territory in the lesser Asia, the love of their country retained the main body in Greece, where they accumulated to prodigious numbers. Our present territory bids fair for the place of accumulated population for the first ages. One thing which in 20 or 30 years time will be found to give a sensible shock to New England emigrations, will be the quitrents on new provinces. Germans have been accustomed to them, but we have not. Free and absolute tenure of *land* and unburdened property, as well as *liberty in religion*, are necessary to tempt us. The new townships after 15 or 20 years settlement are scarce able to bear a small part in the provincial taxes, besides the support of the ministry, building

100 years forward, look over this wide spread wilderness, see it blossom like the rose, and behold it planted with churches

building meeting houses, &c. They would scarcely be able to bear a quitrent over and above this in many years. A township 6 miles square is charged with annual rent of £ 23 sterling. A province of 100 miles square admitting 280 such townships will be settled with 14 000 families, implying 80 000 souls. The quitrent on this province would be £ 6440 sterling at 20s. a thousand acres, or £ 23 a township. The annual public charges of Connecticut before the war are said to have been "£ 4000 to £ 5000 currency, or £ 500 sterling only, when they were above 100 000 souls, and were possessed of old and well cultivated plantations. It is for the interest of the crown, of the british merchants and manufacturers that the common people be rich, towards the greater consumption of merchandize, as well as enlivening industry. The quitrent, tho' a seeming trifle, will at least procrastinate the fruit of colonization, and for a long time be an insupportable burden—which will be felt not only by the planters, but as immediately in commerce. For the circulation of that cash which pays this same trifling quitrent will absorb the most that the farmer will be able to spare for superfluities for a long time. A reciprocation of interest as well as affection to an exiled and long dispised offspring, has doubtless engaged the mother country in our defence. The importations from thence to the continental provinces only, are already arrived to two millions sterling per annum; this is as much as the present numbers will consume. This importation may increase with the inhabitants, if effectual encouragment be given to the fishery, to the foreign trade, and the several provincial staples in which remittances can be made. From 1744 to 1754 the importation doubled: from 1748 to 1758 it more than doubled. But if instead of 10 years we suppose it next to double only in 25 years, or with the natural increase of the people, the amount will be 34 millions sterling for the first period, and proportionably greater for the next. The profits of which to the british merchants and manufacturers, that is to say, to the mother country, will soon repay to her the expences of the American war, even if estimated at Four Millions per annum. Burdens on agriculture or the american commerce will unavoidably affect the national interest, and more than ballance the trifling revenue to the crown from quitrents on a few provinces, especially if we consider that a greater extent of territory would be settled under a *free* tenure than under an embarrassed one. The experiment in New England, especially



churches and temples consecrate to the *pure worship* of the most High—when our present plain edifices for public worship shall be succeeded with a nobler species of building: not indeed with temples whose colonades are deckt with the gilt busts of angels winged; but temples adorned with all the decent ornaments of the most sublime and august architecture—when divinely resplendent truth shall triumph, and our brethren of the congregational communion may form a body of SEVEN MILLIONS! A glorious and respectable body this, for TRUTH and LIBERTY! Well might our fathers die with pleasure, and sacrifice their lives with joy to lay the foundation of such a name, of such a peculiar people whose numbers so soon increase like the sand of the sea, or the stars of heaven, and what is more, whose GOD is the LORD.

Thus I have considered the second argument for union taken from the state and circumstances of the churches. I might have enlarged upon the unhappy consequences of contentions and disunion, by shewing more particularly how they must, or might terminate in the utter subversion of the congregational interest; which might shew in another strong light the wisdom of coalition and harmony. To sum up this argument—if we love the cause; if it gives us pleasure to be embarked in a cause which has Jesus Christ for its head and omnipotent patron, and which under him we can foresee is rising into distinction; ought we not with sincere affection to unite and harmonize, since this union is the basis of its rising into respectable figure?

3. And lastly. I just add a last reason for union, which more immediately affects every one in his individual capacity,

Q 2

city,

especially when compared with several other provinces, under proper distinctions, appears to be a good precedent. Plantation may be made with encouragements but cannot successfully be forced. *Free polity, free religion, free property, and matrimony*, will soon populate a fertile country in a good climate. These have been the basis of our increase.

city, that it will afford a field for the exercise of angelic benevolence and complacency. We can look upon the cause, upon the state of the churches, with a complacency, which cannot be felt in surveying intestine confusion. How good & pleasant a thing is it for brethren to dwell together in unity. Living in peace and harmony tends irresistably to humanize and soften the mind to the most generous and god-like feelings—delights unknown to sectarian contention or intestine variance. It is a very happy circumstance to be situated among a friendly social people, we are insensibly caught of the benevolence which union and peace diffuses. The public love and harmony will enable us with serenity and more sacred satisfaction to celebrate the offices of piety and devotion. Our religious addresses and joyful homage undisturbed, unpolluted with the reluctant feelings of variance, shall ascend as incense holy and acceptable to the Most High. And in common life, instead of broken friendships, and family alienations, we should become united brethren in the highest sense, harmoniously travelling along together, and sweetning the trials of life with the animating complacency of social virtue. Religious contests are apt to sour the temper, which is greatly unhappy in a state preparatory to the communion of angels and glorious beings above. The complacency and love for virtuous minds, like all other moral affections are formed, at least strengthened by previous discipline. If we have lived in serenity and associated with the good here, we shall have acquired the principle of spiritual delight in good beings, which qualifies the soul to be gathered unto seraphs, and to be associated with the purified and refined spirits of the upper world. We have unavoidable afflictions eno' without coming new ones. It is greatly desirable, towards our own felicity, to see the churches in peace, to dwell together in love.

Our churches afford a most agreeable review. We have lived to "*see the sinking church arise.*"\* We may cast our eyes around us in a wide extended and still extending

\* Watts.



tending prospect, and feast them with beautiful clusters of churches on this flourishing vine which God almighty hath planted. Let us accustom ourselves to take an annual view, and carefully attend to the public exigencies of the churches in the progress of increase or decline. Let us often tell these things to our children, that with their own eyes they may see and admire the wonder-working providence of God. That when they are convinced from an inspection of the ways of God, that the cause they are embarked in flourishes and is secure, and appears evidently emerging superior to all opposition, they may give glory to God and take courage, never desert the cause, but stand here firm and unmoved. I am in no doubt, as I have before said, but that the constitution and general form of our churches is very nearly apostolical. And tho' there are imperfections remaining—yet they are much more easily amended than in any other protestant church, as amendments would not be encountered with the like opposition of authorities and unwieldy temporalities. If we oppress any, it is ourselves only; our churches, and the secular power so much at their command, formerly adopted those oppressive measures, which we always recollect with regret, and disapprobation\*. But even the lower secular oppressions of other sects have long since been at an end. And as by our principles we are not led to persecute others, so let us entertain a manly charity for our protestant brethren of all denominations, rejoicing that they are to a very great degree reformed: and as we believe they respectively judge themselves, each more than others reformed to the scripture rule; so our extensive charity and comprehensive benevolence, is no ways inconsistent with our given the preference to *congregationalism*. We rejoice that men may become good and holy in all communions:—it will be admitted that in different communions there may be different advantages for virtue and piety; and though we think

\* Such were the measures of 1637, 1656, 1692.

think that our churches have the preference in this, as well as in being resembled to primitive scripture model as to the ordinances and forms of worship—yet we doubt not the pious dying from every communion will be received to glory. We are not so bigotted as to think that the tender mercies of the Lord are limited to us, and that none can be saved out of our churches. We rejoice to see men of virtue and true goodness; and it gives us pleasure to view those persons as ornaments of the communions to which they belong, though different from ours. Instead of wishing the extirpation of any sect, we wish them all well and to abound in the knowledge and practice of christianity, and to subsist on truth and honor. We stand firm and fast to the constitution of liberty in our churches—and as we do not oppress others, so we hope not to be oppressed by others. On the footing of equality and universal liberty we are friends to all, but submit not to be subordinate to any. Having secured and fortified our own cause, we may sit down full of a joyful self-complacency, and look around on our christian brethren of the other sects, not with a view of sowing the seeds of discord, not to avail ourselves of their differences, least of all to persecute and oppress them; but to exercise good-will and sincere christian love to them, to let off the emanations of benevolence towards all that fear God and work righteousness.

We see my brethren, the arguments are strong for the congregational union in every point of view. There are some peculiar reasons why the congregational brethren and churches in this colony should be united. Our cause is one, and a cause not in decline, not in disrepute, but in honor and a most flourishing prosperity. Let us be cemented together by forbearance, fellowship, union. Let us, my reverend FATHERS in the ministry give faithful attention to the pastoral labors, and feed the flock of God, the churches over which the holy Ghost hath *made us overseers*



*seers.* Let us teach for doctrines, not the institutes of men, but the pure word of God, that our congregations may grow in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. It will be our wisdom to be united ourselves, and to that end to avoid every thing by which we may unnecessarily offend one another. Pastoral alienations are too often accompanied with alienations among the churches. Our pastoral *conventions* \* tend to harmony, and shew that we are agreed in the principal matters, and willing to walk together. Let the spirit of harmony extend to our churches and congregations, among whom let us be careful to cultivate the principles of harmony and good will to all: that our denomination may be distinguished by an *unbigoted, generous and diffusive charity to others.* Let us animate them with annual accounts of the state of the churches, and with this view let us keep our eyes on the public state. We shall thus act the part assigned us by providence under the general dominion of the mediator. We should account ourselves happy in being charged with the ministry of reconciliation under the prince of peace. Let us make full proof of our ministry:—be the glory of God in the reconciliation of men the great object of our attention. Let our personal sanctity and public utility be animated by considering that the more we have been inured in cultivating piety and love among men, the better shall we be prepared to join the extensive plans of order and happiness on high. And having in this manner been long employed in doing good, and become useful in promoting peace and virtue on earth; we may not only reflect on our past lives with serenity and triumph, but adopt with assurant hope and confidence those divine promises made from the great Lord of the universe the head of the church, in which our future reward is represented under the idea of receiving a kingdom, being appointed to a heavenly ministration, being invested with a larger sphere of

\* First formed in this Colony August 25, 1756.

of action and power, and honored with more talents, more opportunities of doing good; in a word, of being assigned to affairs of more extended benevolence. Be our fidelity then inspired by the realizing anticipation of the future honors, when "they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that **TURN MANY TO RIGHTEOUSNESS,** as the stars forever and ever."

## A M E N.

## APPENDIX



# APPENDIX,

Containing a LIST of the  
NEW-ENGLAND CHURCHES, A. D. 1760.

## CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES

IN

|               |           |     |
|---------------|-----------|-----|
| MASSACHUSETTS | - + - - - | 306 |
| CONNECTICUT   | - - - - - | 170 |
| NEW-HAMPSHIRE | - - - - - | 43  |
| RHODE-ISLAND  | - - - - - | 11  |

530

A LIST of the Ministers, Churches and religious Assemblies, especially of the four Denominations of *Congregationalists, Baptists, Friends, and Episcopalians*, as they lie interspersed in the four New-England Governments, taken for the Beginning of the Year 1760.—

*In some few of these Congregations, the Churches are not yet formed or gathered. I have endeavored to make the Catalogue as accurate and perfect as I could. Some Churches may have been omitted—and there may be some Transpositions. Any Mistakes of this Nature will be forgiven by a candid Mind. It may suffice that I have inserted all that have come to my Knowledge : and that the Number of the congregational Churches are not augmented beyond the Truth.*

E. *Episcopalian.* B. *Baptist.* P. *Presbyterians*, according to the Church of Scotland. The numeral Figures denote the Number of congregational Churches in each Town ; the Total of which in New-England appears to be about 530, inclusive of the presbyterian Churches.

Q

## Province of the MASSACHUSETTS.

## COUNTY of SUFFOLK.

**R**EV. Dr Joseph Sewall 12 Bos-  
 rev Dr Charles Chauncy (TON)  
 rev Dr Jonathan Mayhew  
 rev Thomas Foxcroft  
 rev Samuel Checley  
 rev John Moorhead P.  
 rev Ebenezer Pemberton  
 rev Mather Byles  
 rev Samuel Mather  
 rev Andrew Croswell  
 rev Andrew Eliot  
 rev Samuel Cooper  
 rev Samuel Checkley, jun.  
 rev Jeremiah Condy B.  
 rev Ephraim Bowns B.  
 Friends  
 rev Dr Timothy Cutler } E.  
 rev James Greaton }  
 rev Henry Caner } E.  
 rev John Troutback }  
 rev William Hooper E.  
 rev Ebenezer Gay 3 Hingham  
 rev John Brown  
 rev Daniel Shute  
 rev William Smith 2 Weymouth  
 rev James Bayley  
 rev Samuel Niles P. 3 Brantree  
 rev Anthony Wibert  
 rev Moses Taft  
 rev Dr Miller E.  
 rev Samuel Veazy 1 Hull  
 rev Nathaniel Robbins 1 Milton  
 rev Nathaniel Bowman 1 Dorchester  
 rev Samuel Dunbar 3 Stoughton  
 ——— E.  
 rev Jedidiah Adams  
 rev Philip Curtis  
 rev Joseph Bean 2 Wrentham  
 ——— vacant

rev Mr. Barnum  
 rev Nathan Bucknam 2 Medway  
 rev David Thurston  
 rev Jonathan Townsend 1 Medfield  
 rev Phillips Payson 1 Walpole  
 rev Thomas Balch 4 Dedham  
 rev Andrew Tyler  
 rev Jason Haven  
 ——— vacant  
 ——— E.  
 rev Nathaniel Walter 2 Roxbury  
 rev Amos Adams  
 rev Jonathan Townsend 1 Needham  
 rev Elnathan White 1 Bellingham  
 ——— B.  
 rev Philip Payson 1 Chelsea  
 rev Joseph Jackson 1 Brookline  
 rev John Phillips 1 Castle-William

43

## COUNTY of ESSEX.

Rev Peter Clark 5 Salem  
 rev James Dimon  
 rev Elias Smith  
 rev Dudley Leavitt  
 rev Nathan Holt  
 rev Thomas Barnard  
 rev William M'Gilchrist E.  
 Friends  
 ——— B  
 rev Nathaniel Henshman 3 Lynn  
 rev Joseph Roby  
 rev Benjamin Adams  
 Friends  
 rev John Barnard 2 Marblehead  
 rev Simon Bradstreet  
 rev Peter Bours E.  
 rev Joseph Swain 1 Wenham  
 rev John Chipman 2 Beverly  
 rev Joseph Champney

Rev



# APPENDIX.

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rev Sam'l Wigglesworth 7 Ipswich  
 rev John Walley  
 rev Nehemiah Porter  
 rev ——— Lefly  
 rev Nathaniel Rogers  
 rev Alexander M'Dowall  
 rev John Cleveland  
 rev Jedidiah Jewet 2 Rowley  
 rev James Chandler  
 rev John Emerson 1 Topsfield  
 rev John Lowel 6 Newbury  
 rev Jonathan Parsons P.  
 rev Edward Bais E.  
 rev John Tucker  
 rev Moses Parsons  
 rev William Johnson  
 rev Moses Hale  
 Friends  
 rev Samuel Webster 2 Salisbury  
 rev Edmund Noyes  
 rev Samuel Philips 2 Andover  
 rev William Symms  
 rev William Balch 2 Bradford  
 rev Joseph Parsons  
 rev ——— Bailey 2 Methuen  
 rev Christopher Sargeant  
 rev Edward Barnard 6 Haverhill  
 rev James Cushing  
 rev Benjamin Parker  
 rev Samuel Bachelor  
 ——— vacant  
 ——— vacant  
 rev John Cushing 2 Boxford  
 rev Elizur Halyoke  
 rev Thomas Hibbard 2 Amisbury  
 rev Payn Wingat  
 Friends  
 \* rev Joshua White } Gloucester  
 rev Samuel Chandler } 5  
 rev John Rogers  
 rev Ebenezer Cleveland  
 rev ——— Jaquish  
 rev Bradstreet

rev Benj Toppan 1 Manchester

53

## COUNTY OF MIDDLESEX.

Rev Nath'l Appleton 3 Cambridge  
 rev Samuel Cook  
 rev Ettis Aphorp E.  
 ——— vacant  
 rev Hull Abbot } Charles-  
 rev Thomas Prentice } town 1  
 rev Seth Storer 1 Watertown  
 rev Daniel Bliss 1 Concord  
 rev Josiah Sherman 2 Woburn  
 rev Thomas Jones  
 rev William Hobby 2 Reading  
 ——— vacant  
 rev Israel Loring 2 Sudbury  
 rev William Cook #  
 rev Aaron Smith 1 Marlborough  
 rev Jonas Clark 1 Lexington  
 rev Jonas Miriam 1 Newtown  
 rev Joseph Emerson 2 Malden  
 rev Eliakim Willis  
 rev Ebenezer Bridge 1 Chelmsford  
 rev John Chandler 1 Billerica  
 rev Samuel Lock 1 Sherburn  
 rev Joshua Prentice 1 Holliston  
 rev Caleb Trowbridge 3 Groton  
 rev Joseph Emerson  
 ——— vacant  
 rev Matthew Bridge 1 Framingham  
 rev Ebenezer Turell 1 Medford  
 rev Henry Gardner 1 Stow  
 rev Josiah Goodhue 2 Dunstable  
 ——— vacant  
 rev Thomas Parker 1 Dracut  
 rev John Searl 1 Stoneham  
 rev Daniel Rogers 1 Littleton  
 rev Samuel Barrett P. 1 Hopkinton  
 ——— ——— E.  
 rev Nathaniel Sherman 1 Bedford  
 R 2 rev

rev Willard Hall 1 Wesford  
 rev Isaac Morrell 1 Wilmington  
 rev Sampson Spauldin 1 Tewksbury  
 rev John Swift 1 Acton  
 rev Jacob Cushing 1 Waltham  
 \* rev Phin. Hemingway 1 Townsend  
 rev Stephen Badger 2 Natick  
 — vacant  
 rev. William Lawrence 1 Lincoln

43

## COUNTY OF WORCESTER.

Rev Thad. Maccarty 1 Worcester  
 rev Isaac Jones 1 Western  
 rev Eli Forbes 3 Brookfield  
 rev Joseph Parsons  
 rev Nathan Fisk  
 rev Joseph Roberts 1 Leicester  
 rev Joshua Eaton 1 Spencer  
 rev Thomas Green B.  
 Friends  
 \* rev Job Cushing 2 Shrewsbury#  
 rev Ebenezer Morse  
 rev Ebenezer Parkman 2 Westboro'  
 rev John Martyn  
 rev Nathan Stone 1 Southborough  
 rev Charles Gleason 1 Dudley  
 # rev John Campbel 1 Oxford#  
 — vacant 1 Charlton  
 — ~~vacant~~ 1 Sturbridge  
 rev Mr Fish B.  
 rev David Hall 2 Sutton  
 rev James Welman  
 rev Mr Marsh B.  
 rev Aaron Hutchinson 1 Grafton  
 rev Nathan Webb 1 Uxbridge  
 Friends  
 rev Elisha Fish  
 rev Joseph Dorr 2 Mendon  
 Friends  
 rev Amariah Frost  
 — — B.

rev William Phipps 1 Douglass  
 rev David White 1 Hardwick  
 rev Benj. Ruggles 1 New-Brantree  
 rev James Humphries 1 Perquage  
 rev Aaron Whitney 1 Peterham  
 rev Thomas Frink 2 Rutland  
 rev Joseph Buckminster  
 — vacant 1 Princetown  
 rev Joseph Davis 1 Holden  
 — vacant 1 Narraganset No. 6.  
 — vacant 1 Westminster

rev Tim. Harrington 2 Lancaster  
 rev John Mellen  
 rev John Rogers 1 Leominster  
 rev Thomas Goss 1 Bolton  
 rev Joseph Wheeler 1 Harvard  
 \* rev David Stearns 1 Lunenburg  
 rev Jonathan Winchester 1 Dor-  
 (chester Canada  
 — vacant 1 Ipswich-Canada  
 rev Lemuel Hedge 1 Roxbury-Ca-  
 [nada

43

## COUNTY OF HAMPSHIRE.

Rev Jonathan Ashley 1 Deerfield  
 \* rev Mr Billings 1 Greenfield  
 rev Joseph Ashly 1 Sunderland  
 rev Judah Nash 1 Montague  
 rev Samuel Hopkins 1 Hadley  
 rev John Woodbridge 1 So. Hadley  
 rev Mr Parsons 1 Amherst  
 rev Tim. Woodbridge 1 Hatfield  
 rev John Hooker 2 Northampton  
 rev Mr Judd  
 rev Mr Cutler 1 Quobbin  
 rev Stephen Williams 6 Springfield  
 rev Robert Breck  
 rev Noah Merick  
 rev John M'Kinstry  
 rev Elijah Lothrop  
 — vacant  
 — — B.



# APPENDIX.

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Rev John Ballantine 1 Westfield  
 rev Mr Bridgham 2 Brimfield  
 ——— vacant  
 ——— vacant B.  
 rev Jedidiah Smith 1 Granville  
 rev Mr Morton 1 Blanford  
 rev Mr Strong 1 New-Marlboro'  
 rev Mr Jones 1 No. 3.  
 rev Ebenezer Martin 1 No. 4.  
 rev Stephen West 1 Stockbridge  
 ——— vacant 1 Falltown  
 rev Jonathan Hubbard 2 Sheffield  
 rev Samuel Hopkins  
 rev Jesse Clark 1 Spencer  
 ——— vacant 1 Egremont  
 rev Justus Forward 1 Coldspring  
 rev Abraham Hill 1 Rhodetown  
 rev Mr M'Dole 1 Colerane  
 — rev Ezra Thayer 1 Ware-River  
 rev Adonijah Bidwel 1 No. 1.†  
 rev Mr Abercrombie 1 Pelham  
 ——— vacant 1 Westhofuck  
 ——— vacant 1 Pontoosac  
 ——— vacant 1 Palmer  
 rev John Hubbard 1 Northfield

40

## COUNTY OF PLYMOUTH.

Rev Jacob Bacon 3 Plymouth  
 rev Chandler Robbins  
 ——— vacant  
 — rev William Rand 1 Kingston  
 — rev Charles Turner 1 Duxbury  
 — rev Atherton Wales 2 Marshfield  
 — rev Thomas Brown  
 ——— ——— E.  
 — rev Sherjashub Bourn 2 Scituate  
 — rev David Barns  
 — rev Mr Thompson E.  
 — rev Samuel Baldwin 1 Hanover  
 — rev Gad Hitchcock

rev Thomas Smith 1 Pembroke  
 Friends  
 rev Mr Dodge 1 Abington  
 rev Daniel Perkins 5 Bridgewater  
 rev John Angier  
 rev John Shaw  
 rev John Porter  
 rev Solomon Read  
 rev Jonathan Parker 2 Plymton  
 rev John Howland  
 rev Sylvanus Conant 2 Middleboro'  
 ——— vacant  
 rev Ebenezer Hinds B.  
 rev Isaac Backus B.  
 rev Roland Thatcher 1 Wareham  
 rev Timothy Ruggles 3 Rochester  
 rev Ivory Hovey  
 rev Thomas West  
 rev Mr Patten 1 Halifax

27

## COUNTY OF BRISTOL.

Rev Josiah Crocker 1 Taunton  
 ——— ——— E.  
 Friends  
 \* rev Mr White 3 Norton  
 rev Joseph Palmer  
 rev Mr Carpenter  
 ——— vacant 2 Easton  
 ——— vacant  
 ——— vacant 1 Dartmouth  
 Friends 4 meetings  
 rev Silas Brett 1 Freetown  
 Friends  
 rev Samuel Toby 1 Berkley  
 rev Nathan Fisher 1 Dighton  
 rev John Wales 1 Raynham  
 rev Mr Wood B. Swanzy  
 rev Job Mason B. }  
 rev Rufel Mason B. }  
 Friends  
 rev Abijah Welde 2 Attleborough

+ Tyngsboro

Rev Peter Thatcher  
 rev Mr Carnes 3 Rehoboth  
 rev Mr Rogerfon  
 rev Mr Peck  
 rev Daniel Martin B.  
 rev Nathan Pierce B.  
 rev Mr Rounds B.

—  
16

## COUNTY of BARNSTABLE.

Rev Caleb Upham 1 Truro  
 ——— B.  
 rev Ifaiah Lewis 3 Eastham  
 rev Edward Cheever  
 rev Joseph Crocker  
 rev Stephen Emery 1 Chatham  
 rev Josiah Dennis 2 Yarmouth  
 rev Grindal Rawson  
 rev Ifaiah Dunstar 2 Harwich  
 rev John Dennis  
 ——— vacant  
 rev Mr Chase B.  
 rev Joseph Green 2 Barnstable  
 rev Mr Shaw  
 rev Abraham Williams 1 Sandwich  
 Friends  
 rev Gideon Hawley } Mashpee  
 rev Sol. Bryant, Ind. } 1  
 rev Samuel Palmer 1 Falmouth  
 Friends —

—  
14

## COUNTY of DUKES COUNTY.

Rev Andrew Boardman 1 Chilmark  
 ——— vacant Tisbury  
 ——— vacant 1 Edgarton  
 Indian Church 1 Gayhead  
 rev Zech. Mayhew 1 Christiantown  
 Friends — Nantucket  
 ——— vacant 1

—  
5

## COUNTY of YORK.

Rev Isaac Lyman 2 York  
 rev Samuel Lanckton  
 rev Benjamin Stevens 3 Kittery  
 rev John Rogers  
 rev Josiah Chase  
 rev Jacob Foster 2 Berwick  
 rev John Morfs  
 Friends

rev Mr Hemingway 2 Wells  
 rev Mr Little  
 rev John Hovey 1 Arundel  
 rev Moses Morrel 1 Biddeford

—  
11

## COUNTY of CUMBERLAND.

Rev Thomas Smith 3 Falmouth  
 rev John Wiswall  
 rev Ephraim Clark  
 Friends  
 rev Nicholas Loring 2 Yarmouth  
 rev Elisha Eaton  
 Friends  
 rev Richard Elvin 2 Scarborough  
 ——— vacant  
 rev Mr Dunlap 1 Brunswick  
 ——— 1 Gorhamtown.

—  
9

## COUNTY of LINCOLN.

Rev Mr Bailey E. Pownalborough  
 ——— vacant 1 Georgetown  
 ——— vacant 1 Woolwich  
 ——— vacant 1 Newcastle.

—  
3

Total of congregational churches in  
 province of Massachusetts, 306.  
 In year 1749 they were\* 250.

\* *Summary hist. V. I. P. 542.*  
 COLONY



# APPENDIX.

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## COLONY of CONNECTICUT.

### COUNTY of NEW-HAVEN.

Rev Joseph Noyes 8 } New-  
rev Chauncy Whittelsey } Haven  
\* Isaac Stiles

— — — E.  
rev Ebenezer ~~Sunder~~son E. **P**  
rev Benjamin Woodbridge

rev Samuel Bird  
rev Naphtali Dagget  
Nicholas Street  
rev Noah Williston

— — — E.  
— — — vacant

rev Samuel Whittelsey 2 Milford  
rev Job Prudden P.

rev Thomas Ruggles }  
rev Amos Fowler } 5 Guilford

rev Jonathan Todd  
rev James Sprout  
rev John Richards  
rev Richard Ely

— — — E.

rev Jonathan Merick 3 Branford

rev Philemon Robbins

rev Warham Williams

rev Samuel Hall 4 Wallingford

rev Theophilus Hall

rev James Dana

— — — vacant

— — — E.

— — — B.

rev Elizur Goodrich 1 Durham

rev Daniel Humphry 2 Darby

rev Jonathan Lyman

rev Richard Mansfield E.

rev Samuel Todd 3 Waterbury

— — — E.

rev Mark Leavenworth

rev James Scovel E.

rev John Trumble —

### COUNTY of HARTFORD.

Rev Elnathan Whitman 4 Hartford

rev Edward Dorr

rev Eliphalet Williams

rev Nathaniel Hooker

rev Daniel Russel 3 Weathersfield

rev James Lockwood

rev Joshua Belding

rev Hezekiah Bissel 7 Windsor

rev William Russel, jun.

rev Thomas Potwine

rev Joseph Perry

rev Seth Norton

— — — vacant

— — — vacant

rev William Russel 6 Middletown

rev Moses Bartlit

rev Edward Eells

rev Benjamin Bowers

rev John Norton

rev Ichabod Camp E.

— — — vacant

rev Samuel Newel 7 Farmington

— — — E.

rev Timothy Pitkin

rev Ebenezer Booge

rev Samuel Clark

rev Benjamin Chapman

rev John Smalley

— — — vacant

rev William Gibbs E. Symsbury

rev Joseph Strong 3

rev Jesse Roots

— — — vacant

rev Eleazar May 1 Haddam

rev Grindal Rawson 3 E. Haddam

rev Hobart Eastabrook

rev Joseph Fowler

rev Ephraim Little 4 Colchester

rev Thomas Skinner

Rev Elijah Mason

— vacant

rev Benjamin Pomroy 3 Hebron

rev Samuel Lockwood

rev Elijah Lothrop

rev Samuel Peters E

rev Isaac Chalker 2 Glassenbury

rev John Eells

rev Peter Raynolds 1 Enfield

rev Ebenezer Gay 2 Suffield

rev John Graham jun.

rev Freegrace Leavitt 1 Somers

rev Thomas White 1 Bolton

rev Mr Willard 1 Stafford

rev Gideon Noble 1 Willington

rev Nathan Williams 1 Tolland

51

## COUNTY OF FAIRFIELD.

Rev John Beach E Fairfield

rev Noah Hobart 5

rev Joseph Lamson E

rev Daniel Buckingham

rev Nathaniel Bartlit

rev Samuel Sherwood

rev Seth Pomroy

rev Jedidiah Mills 4 Stratford

rev Christopher Newton E

rev James Beebee

rev Izrahiah Wetmore

rev Edward Winslow E

rev Robert Ross

— — E

rev Moses Diekenfon 3 Norwalk

rev Jeremiah Leaming E

rev William Gaylord

rev Robert Silliman

rev Ebenezer Dibble E Stanford

rev Benjamin Strong 3

rev Moses Mather

rev Noah Welles

rev Abraham Todd 2 Greenwich

— vacant

rev Ebenezer White 1 Danbury

rev David Judson 2 Newtown

rev Thomas Brooks

rev Jonathan Ingersoll 1 Ridgfield

rev Elisha Kent 3 Newfairfield

rev Elijah Sill

rev James Taylor

24

## COUNTY OF NEW-LONDON.

Rev Math. Greaves E. N London

rev David Jewit 2

rev Mather Byles

— — — B

rev Benjamin Lord 6 Norwich

— — — E

rev Jabez Wight

rev Benjamin Throop

rev Peter Powers

rev John Ellis

— vacant

rev Jared Elliott 2 Killingworth

rev William Seward

rev William Hart 4 Saybrook

rev Stephen Holmes

rev John Devotion

rev Simeon Stoddard

rev George Grifwold 3 Lyme

rev George Beckwith

rev Stephen Johnson

rev Jacob Johnson 2 Groton

— — — E

rev Mr Barber

rev Valentine Wightman B

rev Eben. Rossiter 3 Stonington

rev Nathaniel Pells

rev Joseph Fish

rev Hezekiah Lord 2 Preston

rev Ashur Rossiter

24

COUNTY



# APPENDIX.

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## COUNTY OF WINDHAM.

Rev Samuel Mosely 3 Windham  
 rev Ebenezer Devotion  
 rev Stephen White  
 rev Solomon Williams 3 Lebanon  
 rev Jacob Eliot  
 rev Eleazer Wheelock  
 rev David Rowland 1 Plainfield  
 rev James Cogswell 1 Canterbury  
 rev Richard Salter 2 Mansfield  
 rev Daniel Welch  
 rev Nathan Strong 2 Coventry  
 rev Oliver Noble  
 rev Abel Stiles 3 Woodstock  
 rev Stephen Williams, jun.  
 — vacant  
 rev David Ripley 2 Pomfret  
 rev Aaron Putnam  
 rev Aaron Brown 3 Killingly  
 rev Noadiah Ruffel  
 rev Eden Burroughs  
 rev Timothy Allen 1 Ashford  
 rev Samuel Durance P. 1 Volentown  
 rev Mr Horton 1 Union  
 rev Josiah Whitney 1 Mortlake.

24

## COUNTY OF LITCHFIELD.

Rev Judah Champion 1 Litchfield  
 rev Solomon Palmer E.

\* rev. Anthony Stoddard  
 4 Woodbury  
 rev John Graham  
 rev Thomas Canfield  
 rev Daniel Brinsmade  
 rev Nathaniel Taylor 2 New  
 Milford  
 — — — — E.  
 — — vacant  
 Friends  
 rev Andrew Bartholemew 1 Har-  
 winton  
 rev Jonathon Marsh 1 New Har-  
 ford  
 rev Jesse Ives 1 Norfolk  
 rev Daniel Farrand 1 Canaan  
 rev Jonathan Lee 1 Salisbury  
 rev Noah Wadham 4 Kent  
 rev Joel Bardwell  
 rev Mr Osborn  
 rev Mr Tredwel  
 rev Cotton Mather Smith 1 Sharon  
 rev Hezekiah Gould 1 Cornwa  
 rev Abel Newel 1 Goshen  
 rev Natha. Roberts 1 Torrington

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Total of congregational churches  
 in the colony of Connect. 1749  
 A. D. 1749 said to be about 108  
 But more probably 115

In the year 1760 died 10 of the pastors ; 18 ordained, including one instalment ; and 6 new churches gathered, whose parishes are included in this list. At the end of the year, I think there are 108 of these parochial congregations whose churches are not formed, viz. 10 for Massachusetts, and 5 for Connecticut. So that while the total of parochial congregations is 530, the total of churches is 515 for the end of the year 1760. If the total of churches in 1749 was but 407, as Dr. Douglass asserts, we have multiplied 108 churches in 12 years.

R

PROVINCIAL

## PROVINCE of NEW-HAMPSHIRE.

**R**EV. Arthur Brown E. Ports-  
mouth.

rev Samuel Langdon 2

rev Samuel Haven

rev Marmaduke Brown E

rev Woodbridge Odlin 2 Exeter

rev Daniel Rogers

rev Ward Cotton 4 Hampton

rev Josiah Bailly

rev Jeremiah Fog

rev Nathaniel Gookin

Friends

\* rev William Allen } 1 Green-

rev Samuel M'Clintoc } [land

rev Stephen Chase 1 Newcastle

rev Samuel Parson 1 Rye

rev Joseph Adams 1 Newington

rev Joseph Adams 1 Stratham

\* rev Joseph Secomb 2 Kingston

rev Peter Coffin

rev W<sup>m</sup>. Parsons 1 Southampton

rev Josiah Cotton 1 Sandown

rev Ebenezer Flagg 2 Chester

rev Mr Wilson P

rev David M'Gregore P 2 Lon-

donderry.

rev Mr Davison P

rev Timothy Walker 1 Rumford

rev Daniel Wilkins P 1 Souhegan

rev Daniel Emerson 1 Hollis

rev Mr. Merril 1 Nottingham *W<sup>m</sup>T*

rev Mr. Stearns 1 Eppes

rev Nathaniel Trask 1 Brentwood

rev Jonathan Cushing 1 Dover

Friends

rev John Tuck 1 Gosport

rev Mr Pike 1 Somersworth

Friends

rev Ezra Carpenter 1 Ashwelot

rev John Moody 1 Newmarket

rev John Adams 1 Durham

rev Mr Prince 1 Madbury

rev Jonathan Eames 2 Newton

rev Benjamin Butler *Nottingham*

rev Mr Hobbs 1 Pelham

rev Mr Bailey 1 Salem

rev Mr Hughston P. 1 Merrimack

rev Mr M'Dowal 1 Goffs-Town

rev Mr Scales 1 Hopkinton

rev Mr Whittemore 1 Suncook

rev Mr Kingaid P *W<sup>m</sup> P<sup>r</sup>*

rev Mr Hill 1 Rochester

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A.D. 1749 about 30

COLONY of RHODE-ISLAND and PROVIDENCE  
PLANTATIONS.

**F**RIENDS NEWPORT

rev Thomas Pollen E.

rev Edward Upham B.

rev John Maxson B. Sabb.

rev William Vinal 1

rev Ezra Stiles 1

rev Gardner Thurston B.

Moravian

Synagogue

rev Samuel Windfor B. PROVI-

rev Mr Greaves E. (DENCE

rev Joseph Snow 1

— vacant 1

Friends

Friends



# APPENDIX.

39

Friends Portsmouth  
rev Charles Holden B. Warwick  
rev Benjamin Pierce B.

Friends

— — — E.

rev Joseph Park 1 Westerly

Friends

rev Samuel Aldborough B. North-  
Kingston

Friends South-Kingston

rev Joseph Torrey 1

rev Samuel Fayerweather E.

rev James Rogers B.

— vacant B.

— vacant 1 New-Shoreham

rev John Gorton B. East-Green-

Friends (wich

Friends Jamestown

rev John Windsor B. Smithfield

Friends

— vacant B. Scituate

rev David Mitchel B. Gloucester

Friends Charlestown

rev Benjamin Gardner B. West-  
Greenwich

rev Peter Worden B. Coventry

— vacant B. Exeter.

rev John Usher E. Bristol

rev John Burt 1

rev Othniel Campbell 1 Tiverton

rev David Rounds B.

Friends

rev Jona. Ellis 1 Little-Compton

rev Timothy Brown 1

Friends

rev Mr Townsend 1 Warren

rev Mr Maxwell

rev Mr Cook B. Cumberland

Friends Richmond

rev Tho. Burlingham B. Cranston

Friends

rev Thomas Hiscox } B. Sab

rev Thomas Clark } Hopkinton

Friends,

